

**PILOT PROGRAM FOR THE REFORM OF
ABSENTEE VOTING PROCEDURES
ESTABLISHED BY THE 2003
CONNECTICUT GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

PUBLIC ACT NO. 03-227

*Report of the State Elections Enforcement Commission
to the Joint Committee on
Government Administration and Elections*

January 15, 2004

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I. Executive Summary

Abuses in the absentee voting system have become more prevalent, and the State Elections Enforcement Commission has been required to investigate an increasing number of elections, primaries and referenda in which such allegations have been leveled. In recent years the Commission has sought criminal prosecution and collected thousands of dollars in civil penalties for violations it has uncovered. After careful study, the Commission concluded that absentee ballot violations could be traced to structural weaknesses in the existing laws.

Public Act No. 03-227 was proposed to address those structural weaknesses, and to experiment with new procedures for the absentee voting process that would enhance the integrity of the process by preventing fraud and abuse. The legislation, which was enacted with overwhelming bi-partisan support, established a pilot program that incorporates these revised procedures. Three municipalities were eligible to participate in the program: one in the upper third in population, another in the middle third, and the last in the lower third. Municipalities that desired to participate in the experiment were required through their legislative bodies to signify their consent, and the Commission was authorized to designate the three municipalities for participation in the program.

West Haven, Winsted and Kent were chosen for inclusion in the program. The major components of the program, as prescribed by the legislation, were that a neutral corps of election officials, called "*absentee ballot coordinators*" or "*ABCs*," were to provide assistance to those requiring it in the completion of their absentee ballot applications, and ballots. These ABCs, appointed by the Registrars of Voters, would work in teams to render assistance. Candidates and campaign workers were prohibited from distributing absentee ballot applications and providing assistance to applicants in completing their applications. The other essential components of the pilot program procedures were that applications and the list of applicants would be kept confidential by the town clerk until the Friday before the election. These components were intended to prevent undue influence, coercion and fraud in the absentee voting process, and to ensure that absentee voters were accorded the same constitutional right to privacy of their votes, as are those who vote at the polling places.

The Commission assembled an Advisory Committee to work out the details of the implementation of the program. This Committee was comprised of town clerks, registrars of voters, and representatives of the Office of the Secretary of the State and citizen advocacy groups. Subcommittees were also created to advise and establish the forms and printed communications needed to implement the program, the publicity strategies, and the evaluation of the program.

After the election in the three pilot towns, surveys were disseminated to town clerks, registrars of voters, ABCs, candidates and party chairs, and absentee voters. The evaluations received by the Commission were reviewed and analyzed by the subcommittee. The responses to the program, both in general and with regard to the specific components, were overwhelmingly positive.

The State Elections Enforcement Commission believes that the evaluations clearly indicate that the program was viewed as a success by the participants, that the procedures utilized in the program were an improvement over current law and that the revised procedures favorably affected the integrity of the absentee voting process. Moreover, no absentee voter was denied an opportunity to vote in the election. The costs of the implementation of the program, consisting of compensation paid to the ABCs, were minimal. In all, the pilot program achieved its intended objectives while at the same time, ensuring absentee voters rights were protected, and at a negligible cost to the participating towns.

In conclusion, the Commission recommends that the 2004 General Assembly enact the components of the pilot program as a mandate for all elections and primaries.

II. Background and Legislation

In response to a growing number of complaints and investigations involving allegations of absentee voting abuses, the State Elections Enforcement Commission studied ways to curb these abuses. The Commission's concern for the integrity in the absentee voting process is balanced with its concern for those who legitimately need to vote absentee. Any legislative solution to this growing abuse must carefully weigh these important interests.

From its experience in investigations, the Commission identified problems in the current process of distribution and handling of absentee ballot applications, issuance and casting of absentee ballots with the aim of ensuring that the opportunity for undue influence and fraud in the process is significantly diminished. All the cases handled by the Commission in recent years suggest that abuses begin with a system that allows candidates, campaign and party workers to freely distribute applications for these ballots to any one, regardless of eligibility. More often than not, campaigns would concentrate on the elderly, low income, disabled and non English-speaking voters; those who are most vulnerable and least likely to reject the offer of the opportunity to vote absentee. Campaign workers would rarely explain eligibility requirements, thereby leaving a distinct impression with the voter that as long as they were registered they could vote by absentee ballot. They would help the applicant complete the application in their homes or in the community rooms of multi-family dwellings, and would hand carry the completed application back to Town Hall. With knowledge that the Town or City Clerk had 24 hours to issue a ballot, the candidate or campaign worker would return to voter's home to inquire whether he needed any assistance. The more egregious cases involved unlawful assistance in the completion of ballots and possession of ballots. It was evident that the lack of confidentiality of the list of applicants for absentee ballots greatly contributed to intrusion of the absentee voter's privacy, and to the potential for serious abuses in the voting process.

After identifying the main problems in the current system, the Commission began discussion of possible solutions. It decided on a comprehensive solution that addressed each of the problems. To combat the problem of the overzealous candidate and campaign workers foisting absentee ballot applications on those who didn't need or request them, the Commission felt that candidates and campaign workers should not be permitted to distribute them or assist in their completion. However, in recognition that some portion of the voters actually needed assistance, the Commission borrowed the concept already in existing law of joint supervision by persons of different political parties. Thus, the idea of a new election official was born, the absentee ballot coordinators. To ensure their neutrality, the ABCs would have no ties to the town committees or candidates competing in the election. They would be appointed by each Registrar of Voters, as in the case of other election officials who work at the polls. In addition to the

Town Clerk and Registrars, the ABCs could distribute applications, and assist in their completion when necessary. Finally, to ensure the same secrecy of the ballot, the list of those issued absentee ballots would remain confidential until a short time before the election. A more detailed summary of the components of the Commission's legislation is found in Appendix B.

Due to the uncertainty of the Commission regarding whether its proposed revisions were the best solution to the stated problems, the Commission decided to propose its legislation as a pilot program. The Connecticut General Assembly was, at the same time, poised to use a pilot program for the testing of new voting technologies. Accordingly, it was decided in December 2002 that these fundamental changes in the absentee voting procedures should be tested as a pilot, rather than introduced in all of the 169 municipalities.

The proposal received overwhelming bi-partisan support in the Connecticut General Assembly when it was introduced in January 2003. House Bill No. 6533 was artfully fine tuned in the Government Administration and Elections Committee, and a substitute was favorably reported by a vote of 15-1. The bill was passed overwhelmingly by the Planning and Development Committee, and then by the Appropriations Committee. In the legislative committee debates, two additional changes to the bill were identified as necessary. Those were that the 3 pilot towns must consent to participate in the new program, and that compensation paid to the ABCs was to be voluntary (discretionary by the participating municipality) to ensure against an unfunded mandate. Those changes were incorporated by amendment to the bill in the House, and the bill as amended was passed by a vote of 145-2. The Senate passed the bill by consent. The Commission gratefully acknowledges the efforts of the GAE Committee's leadership, co-chairs Senator Donald DeFronzo and Representative James O'Rourke, and ranking members Senator Andrew Roraback and Representative Livvy Floren, for their bi-partisan efforts to bring about passage of HB 6533. Finally, the bill became law on July 9, 2003 having been signed by Governor John G. Rowland. A copy of Public Act No. 03-227 is attached as Appendix A.

III. Recruitment of Municipalities

A. Introduction

In relevant part, Public Act No. 03-227 prescribes as follows:

“Notwithstanding any provision of title 9 of the general statutes, the State Elections Enforcement Commission shall establish a pilot program for absentee voting at the municipal elections and primaries held in three municipalities in 2003. The Commission shall notify municipalities of the opportunity to participate in the pilot program and shall select three municipalities to participate, provided the legislative body of each such municipality or, in the case of a municipality in which the legislative body is a town meeting, the board of selectmen, consents to such participation. In making such selections, the commission shall rank all municipalities from highest population to lowest population, and shall select one municipality in the highest third of such ranking, one municipality in the middle third of such ranking, and one municipality in the lowest third of such ranking.”

Following the adjournment of the 2003 regular session of the General Assembly, the Commission staff prepared a list of Connecticut municipalities, ranked by population, using data available from the last federal decennial census. That list is attached as Appendix C. Commission staff also obtained information from the records filed with the Secretary of the State for the 2001 municipal primaries and elections concerning absentee ballot usage. The Commission identified various factors to be considered in the recruitment of participating municipalities:

- (1) high absentee ballot usage coupled with senior or low income public housing;
- (2) desire and commitment of local election officials;
- (3) likelihood of spirited election or primary;
- (4) history or suspicion of abuse in absentee voting;
- (5) level of interest and commitment of local legislative body to participate in program; and
- (6) geographical and political diversity amongst participating towns.

It became evident to the Commission that, as recruitment efforts were not always successful, the level of interest and commitment of the local election officials and legislative body were essential to successful implementation of the pilot program. Other identified factors were therefore, by necessity, given less emphasis.

B. Large Municipality

The effort to recruit a willing large municipality proved to be the greatest of all challenges to implementing the program. As the enabling legislation required the consent of the local legislative body to participate, the Commission was constrained by its own resources and local political issues, to offering participation in the program to one municipality within each population ranking at a time.

The City of Bridgeport, with the largest population and the most significant history of absentee voting abuse, was the consensus choice to recruit for participation in the program. Other significant factors suggesting that Bridgeport was a strong candidate were: high incidence of past usage of absentee ballots, the likelihood of a spirited multi candidate primary for Mayor and strong support from its legislative delegation in the General Assembly. On June 16, we sent a letter to the City Council President and all members of Bridgeport's City Council inviting the city to participate in the program. The issue was referred to the Ordinance Committee of the City Council, and the Commission's Executive Director, Jeffrey B. Garfield, attended and made a presentation before the Committee on June 24. The Ordinance Committee recommended participation to the full City Council. On July 7, the City Council met and after Mr. Garfield answered their questions, voted to participate in the program. By resolution adopted at its meeting on July 16, the Commission designated Bridgeport as the large city participant in the pilot program.

As plans to implement the program in Bridgeport were well underway, their City Council, without notice to the Commission, unexpectedly withdrew their participation at a meeting held August 4. Accordingly, the Commission was forced to rescind its designation of Bridgeport as the large city participant on August 6, and to pursue a different city. Following the City Council's reversal, there was a strong rebuke from both the media and city residents. The Connecticut Post severely criticized the City Council. In addition, there were reports of citizens telephoning the mayor and council members expressing disapproval with the Council's decision to withdraw participation. This public outcry led to reconsideration by the Council. On August 11, the Council once again reversed itself and approved participation. The Commission met in an emergency special meeting on August 15 but decided against re-designating Bridgeport, citing the following reasons:

- (1) The waffling of the City Council evinces a lack of serious commitment to abide by the requirements of the pilot;
- (2) The continued opposition to the pilot requirements by the Democratic Registrar of Voters;
- (3) Severe time constraints to successful implementation of the program for a primary that is only 3 weeks away;

- (4) Concern that persons other than the Town Clerk have distributed applications for absentee ballots outside of the pilot program requirements.

In addition, after the Bridgeport City Council withdrew its support, the Commission had actively begun to recruit Waterbury to participate in the program.

The Commission then focused its efforts to recruit Waterbury. In early August, Mayor Michael Jarjura signified his support of Waterbury's inclusion. A letter of invitation to join the program was subsequently sent to each member of the local legislative body, the Board of Alderman. On August 13, Mr. Garfield met with the Town Clerk who was enthusiastic to implement the program. However, neither of Waterbury's Registrars of Voters was supportive. On August 18, Mr. Garfield made a presentation before the Board of Alderman, and responded to all questions. The Board referred the matter to its elections subcommittee, which took no action that evening. By the end of August, it was evident that there wasn't sufficient support of the Waterbury Alderman to join the pilot program.

In the meantime, the Commission received a letter from West Haven Mayor H. Richard Borer expressing interest in participating in the program, if the opportunity arises. The City of West Haven has had a history of high incidence of absentee voting, and claims of abuse had been made in the past. In addition, there was a very spirited three-way contest for the Democratic mayoral nomination underway, and a primary scheduled for September 9. The primary yielded an unusually high number of absentee ballot requests, and concurrently allegations of abuse of that process. The Commission felt that these factors made West Haven a very strong candidate for participation in the program, and decided to pursue the interest immediately following the primary.

Again, letters were sent to City Council members inviting the City of West Haven to participate for the election. A sample of those letters is found in Appendix D. On September 12, Mr. Garfield met with the Mayor, City Clerk and Registrars of Voters to further explain the program, and they were each enthusiastic to participate in the program. The Mayor called a special meeting of the Council for September 18, but the meeting was cancelled due to a lack of a quorum. Finally, on September 22, after a presentation by Commission Principal Attorney Joan Andrews, and a lengthy question and answer session, the Council voted to participate in the program. The presentation made to the City Council can be found in Appendix E. Accordingly, on September 30 the Commission designated West Haven as the large city participant. West Haven ranks as the 16th largest in population of Connecticut's municipalities.

C. Mid Sized Municipality

During June and July, the Commission considered various potential medium sized towns, including Berlin, Rocky Hill, Cromwell, Portland and Wolcott. In

Berlin, Mr. Garfield met with the Town Clerk and Registrars. After reviewing their absentee voting patterns more closely, it was mutually agreed upon that Berlin would not be a good test for the pilot program. Discussions involving other towns mentioned did not advance significantly. At the beginning of August, the Winchester Town Clerk, Sheila Sedlack, contacted the Commission to express an interest in being considered for participation.

Albert P. Lenge, the Commission's Deputy Director, was the designated liaison with the mid sized municipality. After discussion with the Winchester election officials who were all supportive of the town's inclusion in the pilot program, arrangements were made for a Board of Selectman's meeting at which the subject could be considered. Mr. Lenge made a presentation at such a meeting on August 18 and answered questions. The Board voted unanimously that evening to consent to the town's participation in the absentee voting reform pilot program. The Commission designated Winchester as the mid sized participant at its meeting on August 27.

D. Small Town

With the assistance of Senator Andrew Roraback, Ranking member of the Government Administration and Elections Committee, the Commission encountered very little difficulty finding a suitable small town that was willing to join this experiment in democracy. None of the smaller towns had experienced any significant problems with absentee voting in the past. However, some of the small towns did use absentee ballots more than others, and Kent was one of those towns. Kent's population ranks 149th of the 169 towns. Although its population is small, Kent's enthusiasm for participating in the pilot was unequaled.

On July 22, the Commission liaison with the small town, Principal Attorney Joan Andrews, had conversations the Kent's Town Clerk and Registrars of Voters concerning the requirements of the program. Exactly two weeks later on August 5, Attorney Andrews made a presentation, answered questions and the Board of Selectmen unanimously approved Kent's participation in the program. At its August 6 meeting, the State Elections Enforcement Commission designated Kent as the small town representative in the pilot program.

IV. Implementation of the Pilot Program

A. Formation of Advisory Committee

Following the close of the 2003 regular session of the General Assembly, Commission staff reviewed the legislative history of the enabling legislation to discern any guidance on implementation. There were many details to be worked out including, but not limited to, how best to recruit municipalities to participate, establishing the division of duties between town clerk, registrars of voters and absentee ballot coordinators, how to ensure that candidates and campaign workers in pilot towns do not have access to absentee ballot applications, recruitment of qualified ABCs, training, publicity of program requirements, oversight of the program in the designated pilot towns and the evaluation process. Several important decisions were made in mid June. Each of the three pilot towns would have a key Commission staff person assigned to work exclusively and directly with the local election officials to administer the program. In that regard, the local officials could depend on a single person for answers to questions, and a team concept could be developed that would improve chances for success. Of equal importance, we decided to reach out to town clerks and registrars of voters on a statewide basis to garner their input on the implementation of the program. Local election officials were in the best position to assess whether certain procedures were workable. We also invited input from citizen groups that had either worked directly on the pilot legislation or expressed an interest in its implementation. In addition, we sought representation from the Office of the Secretary of the State and their expertise on election administration, to ensure that the pilot program requirements would work independently of the election laws that applied to all other municipalities for the 2003 primaries and elections. Finally, it was of paramount importance to the Commission that the implementation of the pilot program was consistent with the legislative authorization and intent. Accordingly, we sought legislative input as well. By July 1, the Commission created an Advisory Committee on Implementation of the Absentee Voting Pilot Program, with members drawn from each of the state and local governmental constituencies previously identified, as well as from the non-profit citizen groups.

On July 14, Mr. Garfield, the Commission's Executive Director and General Counsel, chaired and conducted a 5-hour meeting of the Advisory Committee at the Commission's office in Hartford. The meeting was as productive as it was lengthy. Twenty persons attended the meeting, and they are identified in the minutes that are found in Appendix F. As can be gleaned from the minutes, many issues were discussed. It was agreed that a unique application for an absentee ballot would be used for towns participating in the pilot. The application form was thereafter revised in consultation with the Secretary of the State, and included a Spanish translation that was prepared by the staff of the Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission. A copy of the application used in

West Haven is found in Appendix G. The roles of the various election officials were discussed at great length at the meeting, and it was agreed that the descriptions should be reduced to written form and distributed to the officials in the pilot towns. There was great emphasis on ensuring accountability and control of the applications and, at the same time ensuring that no one who legitimately needed to vote by absentee ballot would be denied an application. There was a consensus that the education and training was essential if the program was to succeed, and that candidates and voters alike needed to know and understand the new requirements. Mr. Garfield recommended the establishment of three separate subcommittees to continue to work on the most significant components of the pilot: (1) forms and written communications, (2) publicity and (3) evaluation. Members of the full committee volunteered to serve on the subcommittees, and other subcommittee members were added after pilot towns were designated to ensure proper representation.

B. Subcommittee on Forms

This subcommittee was responsible for preparing all forms, applications, logs and other written communications necessary to implement the program details. Albert P. Lenge, the Commission's Deputy Director and Associate General Counsel chaired the subcommittee. This subcommittee had both an important and time sensitive charge, since without the necessary forms the program could not be successfully implemented. During the two weeks following the Advisory Committee meeting, drafts of the proposed forms and other written communications were prepared. On July 30, the subcommittee met and revisions were made. The biggest challenge was to revise the application form for the absentee ballot to facilitate its comprehension by the applicant and to ensure greater accountability of its distribution. By early August, all forms were finalized and printed for use in the pilot towns.

All of the forms, instructions and training tools developed by the subcommittee are found in appendices G through P, attached to this report. Some of these materials were considered necessary to ensure compliance with the statutory requirements as embodied in Public Act No. 03-227. For example, the legislation prescribed certain eligibility requirements to serve as an absentee ballot coordinator (ABC). Therefore the application for employment as an absentee ballot coordinator, found in Appendix H, was created to serve as proof that the ABCs that were appointed by the registrars of voters did satisfy the eligibility requirements. In addition, the legislation restricted candidates, campaign and party workers from distributing and assisting in the completion of absentee ballot applications, and provided that only the town clerk, registrars of voters and ABCs could do so. Accordingly, to ensure that only authorized personnel were distributing applications, the log, found in Appendix L, was created to bolster accountability. Other printed communications, such as the description of duties of ABCs, found in Appendix N, and the *"Do's and Don'ts for Candidates, Campaign and Party Workers,"* found in Appendix P, were used as education

training tools that were considered necessary or appropriate to successful implementation of the program. To ensure that the candidates and campaigns were fully informed of the program requirements, the Commission sent each candidate on the ballot in the three pilot towns a copy of the *"Do's and Don'ts."*

The Commission gratefully acknowledges the following persons who served on this subcommittee: Albert Lenge and Gregory Zepka (SEEC), Joan Gerdson (Mansfield Town Clerk), Joseph Borges (Republican Deputy Registrar of Bridgeport), Ted Bromley (Staff Attorney, Secretary of the State's Election Services Division), George Buckbee (New Milford Town Clerk), Janis Murtha, (South Windsor Republican Registrar), Judy Beaudreau (Vernon Democratic Registrar).

C. Subcommittee on Publicity

On August 1, the publicity subcommittee met at the office of the State Elections Enforcement Commission to discuss and formulate a strategic plan for educating targeted audiences in the three pilot towns concerning the new requirements for obtaining absentee ballot applications. The key audiences identified were as follows: (1) town clerks, registrars of voters and ABCs; (2) voters, especially the elderly, handicapped and Spanish speaking voters; (3) candidates and party committees; (4) community groups; and (5) media. Various tactics were also discussed to reach the key audiences including, but not limited to, blast e-mails, faxes, direct mail, editorial memos, press conferences and releases, handouts and fliers, and the compilation of a press kit. Severe time and fiscal constraints prevented the use of some of these tactics, but in the end the key audiences were provided with timely information concerning the program either on a face-to-face basis, direct mail or through press releases appearing in the media and other media coverage.

Contact with editors of the Waterbury Republican and New Haven Register was initiated primarily to secure public support of the absentee voting program and to influence local legislative bodies in Kent, Winchester, Waterbury and West Haven to participate in this experiment in democracy. The Commission acknowledges the efforts of Andy Sauer, Executive Director of Common Cause, for his assistance with the Waterbury Republican. Editorial support of the program was indeed provided by these two newspapers and by the Connecticut Post as well (Bridgeport).

After the pilot towns were designated, the first task was to train the election officials in those towns concerning their duties and responsibilities. The Commission staff liaison worked directly with the town clerk and registrars. In West Haven, Mr. Garfield personally trained not only the election officials but also the ABCs that were appointed by the Registrar. A copy of the training outline used in West Haven is found in Appendix R.

Simultaneously with the training of election officials and ABCs, the candidates and party committees were informed of the new requirements regarding distribution of absentee ballot applications. Each candidate and party chair was sent a letter explaining the program and the *"Do's and Don'ts,"* found in Appendix P. Candidates were invited to contact the Commission staff liaison directly with questions. We used the direct mail approach to informing the candidates, as it was the least expensive and most efficient means of communication.

The media was the primary source of informing the voters of the pilot program requirements. This was accomplished by press release, as found in Appendix S, and follow up by Mr. Garfield with media reporters to encourage timely and frequency of information dissemination. In Winchester, Mr. Lenge also had frequent discussions with key community activists who had traditionally been involved in get-out-vote campaigns.

Overall, the efforts to both train election officials and publicize the pilot program were successful, as can be gleaned from the responses to the program evaluation survey. The Commission wishes to gratefully acknowledge the subcommittee members, Jeffrey Garfield (Exec. Dir. SEEC), Andy Sauer, Director of Common Cause Connecticut, Americo Santiago, Policy Director of Democracy Works, and Rae Tramontano, Republican Registrar of Voters in New Haven.

D. Subcommittee on Evaluations

This subcommittee had the important charge of preparing the survey questions for the evaluation of the pilot program in the three municipalities, and to review the responses and make a recommendation to the State Elections Enforcement Commission. Mr. Garfield chaired this subcommittee which met twice, on October 27 to review drafts of survey questionnaires and on December 5 to review survey responses. The Commission staff liaisons with the pilot towns prepared drafts of survey questions for each of the following persons participating in the pilot: (1) town clerks and registrars, (2) absentee ballot coordinators (ABCs), (3) candidates and party chairs, and (4) absentee voters. The subcommittee reviewed the drafts, recommended modifications and after finalization they were disseminated by mail in most instances.

In West Haven, Mr. Garfield personally delivered the blank surveys to the election officials and ABCs at one of 5 weekly progress meetings he held in West Haven City Hall. The ABCs in West Haven were couriers for the voter's surveys to encourage frequency of responses. In all three of the pilot towns, each candidate on the ballot was mailed a survey and therefore given an opportunity to provide a critique of the program.

On December 5, the subcommittee met for the final time to review summary data compiled by Commission paralegal Lois Blackburn from the survey responses received. After much discussion, the subcommittee unanimously recommended

that the State Elections Enforcement Commission seek legislative approval of the pilot program requirements as a statewide mandate.

The Commission gratefully acknowledges the members of the Evaluation subcommittee for their efforts: Joseph Camposeo, Town Clerk of Manchester, Deborah Collins, City Clerk of West Haven, Leslie Cotton, Town Clerk of Southington, Janis Murtha, Republican Registrar of South Windsor, Sheila Sedlack, Town Clerk of Winsted, and Jeffrey Garfield, Albert Lenge and Joan Andrews of the State Elections Enforcement Commission.

V. Program Evaluation and Findings

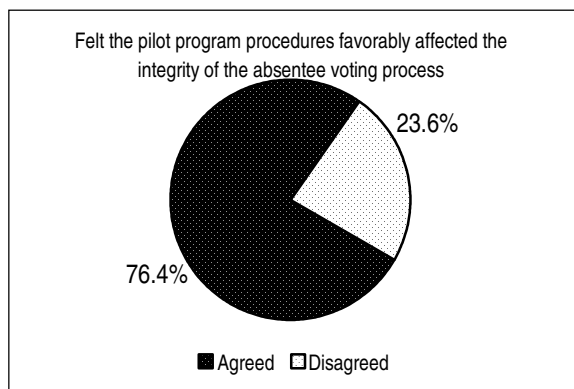
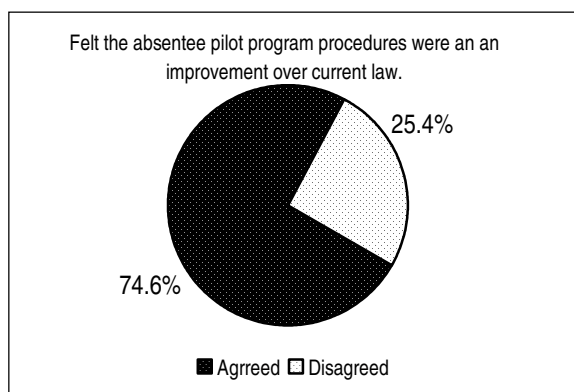
A. Overall Response to Pilot Program

In all, there were 64 survey responses that were received by the State Elections Enforcement Commission categorized as follows: 28 from candidates and party chairs, 9 from town clerks and registrars of voters, 14 from absentee ballot coordinators (ABCs), and 13 from absentee voters. Each person to whom a survey was mailed also received a self-addressed envelope, postage prepaid, to facilitate responses. Surveys were disseminated immediately following the election, and responses requested in two weeks. The Commission received responses from November 7 to November 26, 2003. Names were not requested of persons completing surveys to encourage candor of responses. Although survey questions were drafted for each category of participant in the pilot, there were general questions asked of every participant in an attempt to garner input on each feature of the program requirements.

In analyzing the responses on an overall basis, regardless of town and category of participant, some general trends emerge. Forty four (44) of the fifty nine (59) or **74.6%** responding to the question **said the absentee voting reform pilot program procedures were an improvement over current law.**

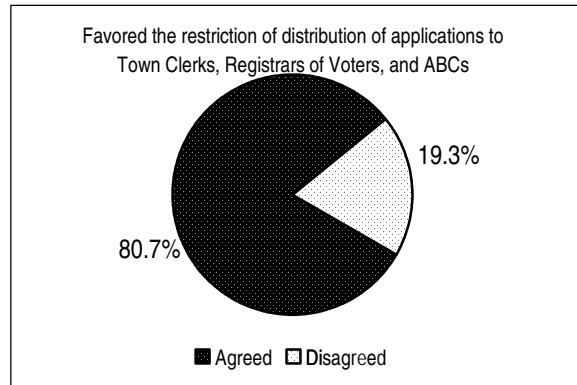
Some of the reasons given for the positive response included the reduction in duplicate applications from the same person, provided voter with chance to determine whether he really wanted to vote, no voter intimidation, less chance of abuse, better service to voter. Similarly, forty two (42) of the fifty five (55) responding, or **76.4%** **said the pilot program procedures favorably affected the integrity of the absentee voting process.** The overwhelming majority cited reasons such as no fraud, and that the program requirements provided choices without pressure from political candidates and groups.

There was an even more positive response to specific features of the program. One of the two major components was that the absentee ballot applications and



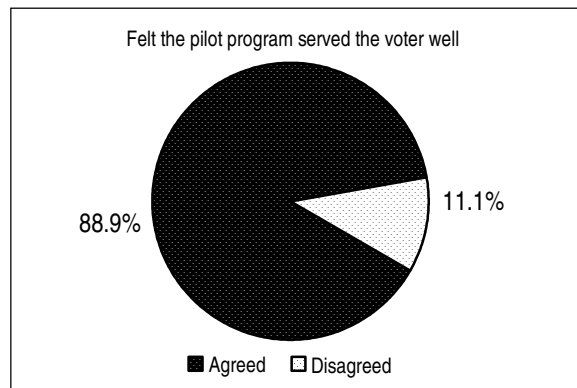
list of applicants were to remain confidential until the Friday before the election; whereas under current law the applications are open to the public. Forty eight (48) of the fifty seven (57) who responded to the question, or 84.2% favored confidentiality of the applications as prescribed in the pilot. Voters commented that they felt better about not being harassed by so many people and that confidentiality prevents improper use of the information (person declaring he will be out of town or is disabled). Another major component of the pilot

procedures was to restrict the distribution of absentee ballot applications to the town clerk, registrars of voters and designated ABCs, and to remove the ability of candidates, campaign and party workers to distribute such applications. Similar to the confidentiality response, forty six (46) of fifty seven (57) responded, or **80.7% favored restriction of**



distribution of applications to town clerks, registrars of voters, and ABCs.

Moreover the responses indicate overwhelmingly that despite these restrictions, the program served the voter well. Forty eight (48) of the fifty four (54), or **88.9% said pilot program served the voter well.** There were only a few isolated instances where voters experienced problems, and those were reported as resolved. There



were reported as resolved. There was a less positive perception of the sufficiency of publicity of the program requirements. Although voters were not asked the question, only 14 of the 43, or **32.6%** of the town clerks, registrars, ABCs and candidates, responding, **felt there was sufficient publicity of the program.**

However the perceived lack of sufficient publicity did not appear to negatively affect absentee ballot usage overall in the three pilot towns when compared to 2001 municipal election, nor were there any reported instances of persons who needed to vote by absentee ballot not obtaining one.

B. Evaluation by Class of Respondent

Town Clerks and Registrars of Voters

There were 9 responses received from the principal election officials in the three pilot towns that were responsible for the implementation of the program requirements. Since the absentee ballot applications could not be distributed by

candidates, campaign and party workers, there was an increase in the workload of these officials to ensure the demand for applications was satisfied. In West Haven, the registrars are part-time, as are their assistants, and therefore the City Clerk absorbed much of the additional duties. The same was true of Kent. Nevertheless, the overwhelming response to the program was positive from all those responding.

Eight of the nine respondents, or **88.9% felt that the pilot program procedures were an improvement over current law**, and the same percentage felt that the procedures favorably affected the integrity of the absentee voting process. Town clerks in West Haven and Winchester indicated that the program reduced duplicate applications and undue political interference from candidates and campaign workers. The initiation of contact with seniors in housing complexes by the ABCs in West Haven, and in group homes in Winchester, was well received and ensured that they were able to vote by absentee ballot if they needed to, and without pressure or intimidation from political campaigns.

As for the specific components of the pilot program, the election officials as a whole were near unanimous in their approval of each of them. A unique application form was developed for use in the towns, and all nine officials responded favorably to the revised form citing larger print, easier to understand, clearer to the reader. Eight of the nine officials responding, or **88.9% favored confidentiality of the applications**, while six of seven responding to the question, or **85.7% favored a prohibition on distribution of absentee ballot applications by candidates, campaign and party workers**. All seven respondents felt that the program served the voter well. There was also a very positive response to the eligibility requirements that the legislation imposed on the ABCs. To ensure neutrality, ABCs could not be members of town committees, municipal employees, or work for a candidate or political party during the election. The majority responded that all restrictions on eligibility to serve as an ABC were appropriate, while some said that they saw no problem with town committee members so long as they worked in pairs to assist applicants who needed assistance. In fact, for all three pilot towns combined, the election officials reported that they received approximately 800 applications, and less than 30 applicants required assistance with their applications. A detailed summary of survey responses from the Town Clerks and Registrars of Voters is found in Appendix T.

Absentee Ballot Coordinators (ABCs)

There were 15 ABCs for the three towns combined: 2 in Kent, 8 in Winsted, and 5 in West Haven. The West Haven Registrars did each appoint 3 ABCs, but one resigned after a week and was not replaced. One of the ABCs there took on the workload, and worked jointly with two other ABCs of the opposite party, at different times, to provide assistance to applicants in the 4 senior housing complexes in that City.

Each of the ABCs received compensation from the town for their services, as permitted by the pilot legislation. In West Haven, each ABC received a stipend of \$250, and the ABC who took on the additional workload received \$500, for a total cost of \$1500. In Winsted, each ABC was compensated at the rate of \$10 plus mileage, and the total cost to the town was \$959.36. In Kent, the two ABCs were paid \$10.60 per hour, and the total cost was \$74.20. In addition to providing assistance to elderly applicants on site, which occurred in West Haven and Winsted, the ABCs were responsible for telephone follow-up with persons identified as needing applications by a candidate or campaign from lists provided to them through the registrars of voters.

The overall response from the ABCs to the pilot was extremely positive. Fourteen (14) of the fifteen (15), or **93.3% felt that the pilot procedures were an improvement over current law, and favorably affected the integrity of the absentee voting process.** All 14 who responded to the question felt that the voter was well served by the program. ABCs commented that voters had expressed their satisfaction of the new procedures to them, and were pleased that there were no unsolicited applications. Most of the ABCs did receive lists of potential applicants, and there was only one reported instance where a voter had already received an application when the ABC contacted him. Some ABCs indicated that the program requirement that they jointly telephone persons identified on candidate lists to verify need of applications was too cumbersome, and that this follow-up process albeit important, could be accomplished by one ABC. All of the ABCs reported receiving sufficient instructions and training in their duties. Thirteen (13) of fourteen (14) enjoyed working in pairs with another ABC of the opposite party. One reported some scheduling difficulty. With only one exception, the ABCs said they would want to serve again if given the opportunity. The survey responses clearly suggest that the ABCs felt that the pilot program worked.

As a group the ABCs were strongly supportive of the specific components of the pilot program. Thirteen (13) of fourteen (14), or **92.8% favored confidentiality of the applications and an equal number favored a prohibition on candidates, campaign and party workers from distributing applications.** The ABCs also commented that such a prohibition would eliminate coercion, undue influence and corruption from the absentee voting process. A detailed summary of the survey responses from the ABCs can be found in Appendix U.

Candidates and Party Chairs

Twenty seven (27) candidates and one party chairman submitted responses to the Commission's survey. The breakdown by town was as follows: from Kent-five (5) candidates, and one party chair, from Winsted-eight (8) candidates, and from West Haven-fourteen (14) candidates. All candidate surveys were sent by mail, with self-addressed, postage prepaid envelopes for their return. There were 34 candidates on Kent's election ballot, and therefore the sampling rate of

return was 14.7%. In Winsted, the rate of return was a strong 26.6%. While in West Haven, the rate of return for candidates was better still at 33.3%.

The Commission expected the candidates' responses to the survey to be highly critical inasmuch as the program restricted them from distributing absentee ballot applications or obtaining access to the list of absentee ballot applicants. Quite surprisingly, this was not the case. Candidate evaluations, with regard to both the specific components of the pilot and the program as a whole, were very supportive. Overall, fifteen (15) of twenty three (23) responding, **or 65.2% felt that the pilot procedures were an improvement over current law**, and fifteen (15) of the twenty two (22) responding, **or 68.2% said that the pilot procedures favorably affected the integrity of the absentee voting process**. Moreover, sixteen (16) of the twenty two (22) responding, **or 72.7% said the voter was well served by the program**.

As for the specific components of the program, there were more critical individual survey comments received from candidates as a group when compared to the other categories of participants. For example, some candidates commented that the procedures were too clumsy or cumbersome. However, the percentage of candidates as a group responding favorably to the elements of the program was nearly as strong as the election officials and ABCs.

Significantly, half of those candidates responding to the question indicate that they provided lists of potential absentee voting applicants to the registrars for delivery to the ABCs for follow up. Thirteen (13) of fourteen (14) candidates said they were pleased with the manner their lists were handled. Candidates voiced relatively few complaints they received from voters concerning availability of applications under the pilot. In Winsted and West Haven, candidates and campaigns traditionally visit elderly housing apartment buildings to distribute applications and do follow-up. In these pilot towns, the ABCs initiated contact with the seniors in these buildings to ensure that no one who needed to vote absentee was denied his rights. The survey asked candidates and others whether they favor the extension of supervised absentee voting (as presently required in nursing homes with 20 or more voters) to apartment complexes with 20 or more voters. Sixteen (16) of the twenty two (22) expressing an opinion favored the extension of supervised absentee voting to apartment buildings with 20 or more absentee voters.

Candidates as a group favored the two major components of the pilot: (1) the confidentiality of the applications, and (2) the prohibition on their ability to distribute applications. Eighteen (18) of the twenty five (25) responding, **or 72% favored confidentiality of the absentee ballot applications**. Similarly, eighteen (18) of the twenty six (26) respondents, **or 69.2% favored prohibition on candidates and campaign workers from distributing absentee ballot applications**. In conclusion, the candidates responding to the survey demonstrated a high degree of support for the pilot program procedures, and

indicated that the program was successfully implemented. The summary of the survey responses from the candidates can be found in Appendix V.

Voters

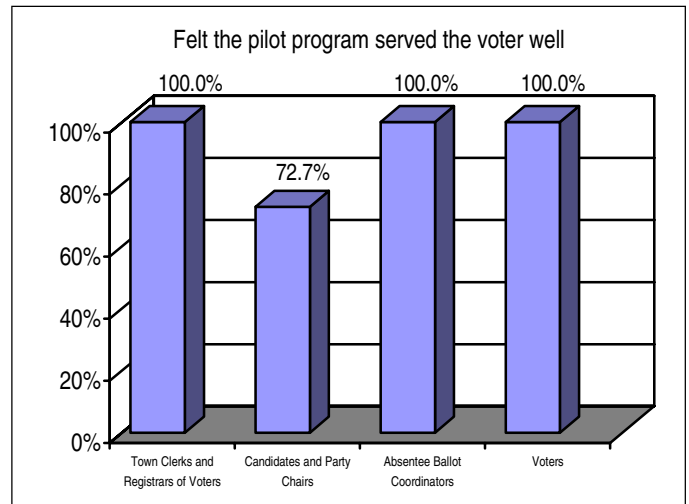
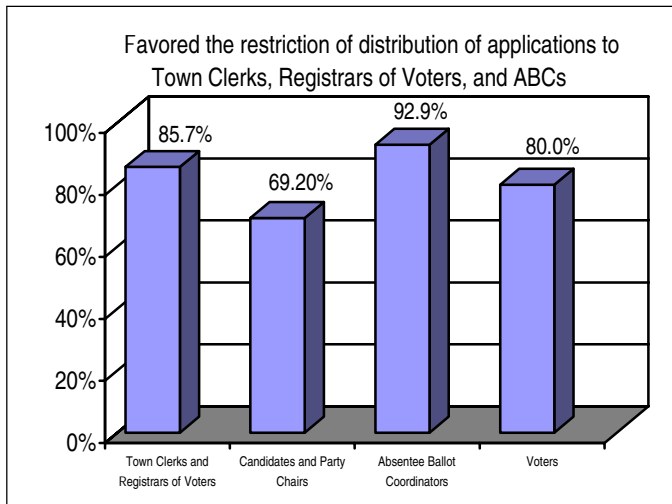
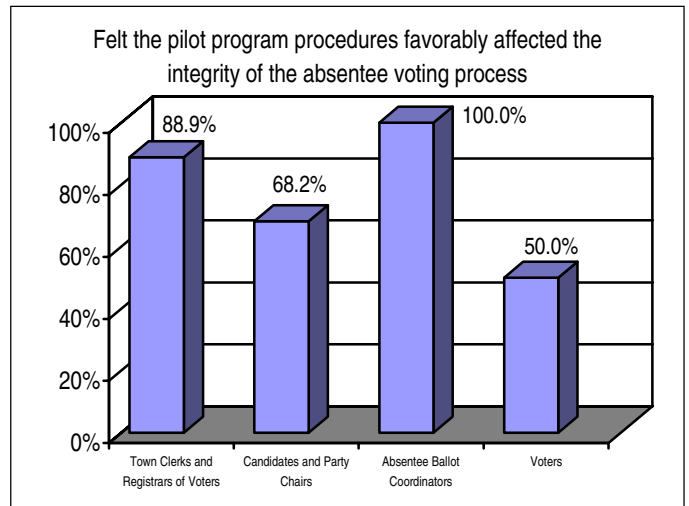
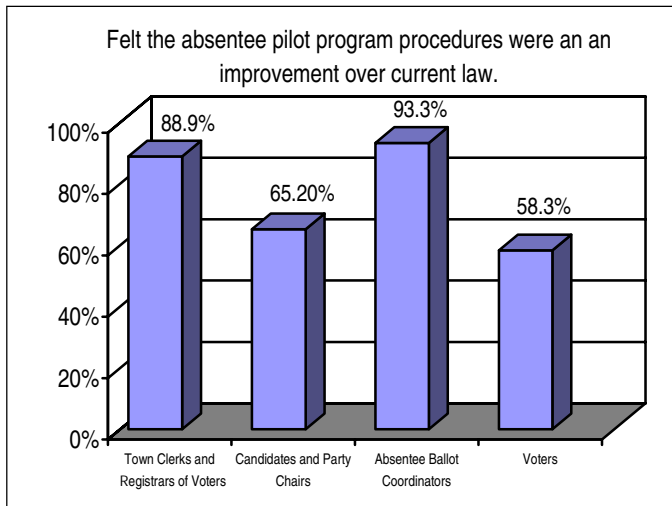
Absentee voter survey responses proved the most difficult to obtain.

The ABCs in the pilot towns were asked to attempt to provide surveys to those they assisted in the completion of their application, since these voters would be presumably in the best position to comment on how they felt the program worked. That few absentee voters were found to have required assistance further reduced the opportunity to get a statistically valid sampling. In the final analysis, the Commission received thirteen (13) responses from voters in total; 4 from Kent, 2 from Winsted and 7 from West Haven. Some thought was given to have the Commission staff attempt to administer the survey to voters in their residences, but fiscal, staffing and time constraints precluded utilizing that methodology.

Voters who responded were overwhelmingly favorable to the pilot program, and perhaps most significantly, all eleven (11) responding to the question, or **100% of voters indicated that the pilot program procedures served the voter well.** Seven (7) of the twelve voters (12) responding, or **58.3% felt that the pilot program procedures were an improvement over current absentee voting procedures,** and **50% felt that the procedures favorably affected the integrity of the absentee voting process.** None of the voters responding indicated that they had a problem obtaining an absentee ballot application. One voter said that the ABCs waited too long to contact her but came out right away to assist her in the completion of the application, and were very professional.

As for the specific components of the pilot program, the voters were unanimous (9 of 9 responding) in their endorsement of the confidentiality provision regarding their applications. In addition, eight (8) of ten (10) responding, or 80% favored a prohibition on candidates and campaign workers from distributing absentee ballot applications. All voters (7) responding to the question indicated that they favored the extension of supervised absentee voting to apartment building with 20 or more absentee voters. Overall, the voters responding to the survey indicated a strong degree of satisfaction with their own experience in, and the general requirements of the pilot program. A more detailed summary of the survey responses from voters is found in Appendix W.

A comparison of responses by category of participant follows:



C. Evaluation of Survey Responses by Municipality

West Haven

West Haven was the Commission's large population participant in the program. With an estimated population of 52,360, West Haven ranks 16th in total population amongst Connecticut's cities and towns. It has had a history of high usage of absentee ballots, especially in primaries. There were 30 responses to the survey from West Haven concerning the pilot program, including the City Clerk, Assistant City Clerk, both Registrars of Voters, all five (5) Absentee Ballot Coordinators, 14 Candidates and 7 Voters. Significantly, one-third of all candidates on the November election ballot responded to the survey.

According to the City Clerk's records, there were 491 absentee ballots issued on applications for the November election, with 415 ballots returned. The rate of return is 84.5%, which is higher than in the preceding September three-way Democratic primary for mayor (54.5%), and comparable to the preceding 2001 municipal election (85.7%). A poor rate of return, as in the September primary, is indicative of persons receiving applications that didn't request or need them. According to the City Clerk, duplicate applications were substantially reduced under the pilot program indicating a cost savings and efficiency. The restriction on distribution of applications by candidates, campaign and party workers was given as the reason for the reduction in duplicate applications.

At the outset of the program, the City Clerk and Registrars of Voters agreed that the ABCs should initiate contact with the 4 high-density senior housing apartment complexes in the city where there had been a pattern of significant usage of absentee ballots, and a fifth senior complex was used a polling place. The ABCs visited those buildings, explained the requirements for voting absentee to the registered voters there in a group setting, and assisted those who felt they were eligible to vote absentee (ill or disabled) with their applications. There was a high degree of voter satisfaction with this aspect of the program, according to the responses of the election officials, ABCs and voters alike. There were no more than three reported of instances of prospective applicants outside of the senior housing complexes visited by the ABCs, (and the nursing homes which were already subject to supervised voting under existing law) where a person needed assistance in completing an application. The very small number of persons requesting assistance in completion of their applications is indicative that candidates and campaign workers do not need to offer such assistance to ensure that voter's rights are protected, and that the servicing of those voters who actually do need assistance is neither laborious nor time consuming.

The responses from West Haven participants to the survey were overwhelmingly positive. Twenty five (25) of the 27 responding to the question, **or 92.6% felt that the pilot program procedures were an improvement over current law.** Most significantly only one of the 14 candidates responded in the negative to that

question. In addition, the same number (25 of the 27 responding) **92.6% said that the pilot procedures had a favorable affect on the integrity of the absentee ballot process**, with only 2 saying it had no effect either way. Comments made to this question included that the pilot program resulted in *“better control,” “more accountability,”* and *“less fraud.”*

The individual elements of the pilot were each considered favorably. Twenty six (26) of twenty seven (27) responding, or **96.3% favored the confidentiality of the applications and the list of applicants** (until the Friday prior to the election). Twenty three (23) of the thirty (30) responding, or **76.7% favored the restriction on candidates and campaign workers from distributing applications**. Even the candidates responding felt that way, with 11 of 15 favoring the restriction on distribution. The unique application form we developed for use in the pilot program was also well received; with 21 of 25 responding indicating that it was an improvement over the current application form.

From the voter’s perspective, the pilot program met their needs. Twenty five (25) of the twenty seven (27) responding, or **92.6% indicated that the program served the voter well**. Five (5) of 6 voters were satisfied with the pilot program procedures, and all voters (5) responding were satisfied with the ABCs. Comments included that *“all who needed an absentee ballot got one.”*

Candidates in West Haven were also satisfied. Eleven (11) of the 12 responding to the question said they were satisfied with the manner in which the ABCs handled the lists of potential applicants they provided to the election officials. Seven (7) of the 13 responding said the pilot procedures (that restricted their ability to distribute applications) enabled them to focus on other aspects of the campaign, and felt this was a positive aspect. Given the size of West Haven, its high usage of absentee ballots, and history of aggressive get-out-the vote campaigns for absentee ballots, candidates’ satisfaction in this city’s experience with the pilot program is especially significant. The candidates’ response to whether they would favor a requirement that supervised absentee voting be conducted at multi-family apartment complexes with 20 or more voters, was also overwhelmingly positive, with 11 of the 13 responding in the affirmative.

There were two criticisms of the program. The first related to publicity of the program requirements by the media. Although the two weekly newspapers servicing the city ran complete stories concerning the pilot program requirements at least two full weeks prior to the election, the New Haven Register didn’t do so until later on. Only 7 of the 20 responding felt there was sufficient publicity in the media of the program requirements. The second criticism was made by the ABCs who felt that when they did follow-up telephone calls with the persons whose names were on lists provided by the candidates, it was unnecessary to do these calls jointly.

Finally, we asked all persons surveyed whether they support or oppose the extension of the pilot program procedures as a statewide mandate, and twenty

two (22) of twenty seven (27), or **81.5% favored that making the program a statewide mandate**. A detailed summary of the survey responses from West Haven is found in Appendix X.

Winsted

Winsted was the mid-sized participant in the program. With a population of 10,664, Winsted ranks 80th of the 169 Connecticut towns. The town has also had a high incidence of absentee ballot usage, especially for their size, and has had issues raised with respect to the legitimacy of the absentee voting patterns in referenda. There were 20 responses to the survey from this town, including all 8 ABCs and 8 candidates.

Under the pilot program, the number of absentee ballots issued by the Town Clerk was 195, and the number of ballots returned was 172. The rate of return was therefore 88.2%. In the municipal election of 2001, the rate of return was comparable 90.2%.

As in West Haven, the Winsted election officials agreed that the ABCs would initiate contact with the 2 senior housing complexes in the town that have historically had a large number of absentee voters. There were no reported instances of the ABCs providing assistance to applicants other than those residing in the elderly housing complexes.

The responses to the program were also positive, albeit to a lesser degree than West Haven. Thirteen (13) of the eighteen (18) responding, or **72.2% said that the pilot program procedures were an improvement over current law**. Candidates were divided with 2 indicating that it was an improvement and three (3) no improvement. In addition, fourteen (14) of the eighteen (18) responding or **77.8% said that the pilot procedures had a favorable affect on the integrity of the absentee ballot process**, with 2 indicating an unfavorable effect, and 2 saying it had no effect either way.

As for the specific elements of the pilot program procedures, Winsted viewed each element favorably. The most popular feature was the restriction on candidates and campaign workers from distributing applications. Sixteen (16) of the nineteen (19) responding or **84.2% favored this feature of the program**. As expected, the negative responses came from the candidates, with 3 of 7 indicating a contrary response. Two thirds (12/16) responding, or **66.7% favored the confidentiality aspect of the applications and list of applicants**. Again, the candidates were more evenly divided, with 4 of 7 favoring confidentiality. There was strong support of the unique application form we developed for use in the pilot program; with 7 of 9 responding indicating that it was an improvement over the current application form. However, there were an equal number of no response or no opinions.

Since only two voters responded, it is difficult to provide statistical meaningful trends. However, 15 of 19 responding to the question indicated that they

thought the pilot program served the voter well. The candidates again made the only negative responses. The ABCs reported no instances of voters being displeased with the new procedures, and there were no measurable complaints from voters.

The eight (8) candidates responding comprise 26.6% of the total candidates on the ballot. Their satisfaction with the program was more evenly divided than in West Haven. Only one candidate reported having provided election officials with lists of potential applicants. Three (3) of seven reported instances that potential applicants were unhappy with the procedures. Yet 4 of 6 candidates responding said they favor removing the ability of candidates, campaign and party workers to distribute applications. Half of those responding said the pilot procedures (that restricted their ability to distribute applications) enabled them to focus more time on the campaign, and felt this was a positive aspect. The Winsted candidates who responded were not supportive of a requirement that supervised absentee voting be conducted at multi-family apartment complexes with 20 or more voters.

Two suggestions were made in the responses that deserve mention. One is that there should be an unaffiliated voter within the pool of ABCs. The second is that the application form should be revised to include color-coded boxes for all data elements that the applicant is required to complete.

Winsted's overall response to the pilot program was favorable, and the comments made in the surveys concerning less fraud, better control, and fairer procedures apply with equal effect to Winsted. Twelve (12) of fifteen (15) responding or **80% said they would support extension of the pilot program requirements as a statewide mandate.** A detailed summary of the survey responses from Winsted is found in Appendix Y.

Kent

Kent was the small town participant in the pilot program. Its population is 2858, which ranks Kent 149th of the 169 towns. It is a rural town with no previously reported problems with absentee voting. We received 14 survey responses from Kent participants, including 5 from candidates and 4 from voters. There were 34 candidates on Kent's general municipal election ballot.

Under the pilot program, there was an increase in the number of absentee ballots returned (98) as compared to the previous election in 2001 (65). The rate of return was near perfect, with 102 ballots issued and 98 returned. The rate of return was high in 2001 at 91.5%, but not as high as under the pilot program.

There were only two ABCs needed for Kent, and each worked 3.5 hours total. Only six of the persons voting absentee required assistance, and were provided it by the ABCs. 86 of the 98 absentee voters needed ballots due to their expected absence from the town. The Town Clerk assumed many of the responsibilities of

the Registrars of Voters under the program as her office is staffed full-time, while the Registrars work only several hours one day a week.

Although the survey responses to the program were positive, it is equally clear that the comments made indicate that the program had a minimal effect. Respondents felt that Kent doesn't have the problems that other towns do. Those responding felt that the procedures generally neither improved nor detracted from the process. There were an equal number responding that procedures favorably impacted the integrity of the process with those responding that there was no impact at all. Responses tend to suggest that the procedures in the pilot do not significantly impact small towns, and Kent has a high rate of absentee voters for its size.

As for the specific elements of the program, there was significant support for the confidentiality requirements pertaining to the applications and the list of applicants. Eight (8) of twelve (12), or **66.7% favored confidentiality of the applications**. Moreover seven (7) of eleven (11) responding, or **63.6% favored the prohibition on distribution of applications by candidates and campaign workers**, with only one candidate responding to the contrary. The Town Clerk and Registrar of Voters did signify their support for the revised application form used in the program. The others responding had either no opinion or experience.

Voter satisfaction with the program was also revealed by the responses. Those five (5) responding felt the program served the voter well, including the three voters who responded. There were no reported problems with voters, and no complaints from voters concerning the new procedures.

Only one of the 6 candidates responding indicated that he/she gave a list of potential applicants to the election officials, and that candidate was pleased with the way the list was handled. Four (4) of the 5 candidates responding said they favor eliminating the ability of candidates and campaign workers to distribute applications. Candidates did not report that the program had any effect on their ability to focus on other aspects of the campaign. Since candidates in Kent generally do not go door-to-door distributing applications, this response is consistent.

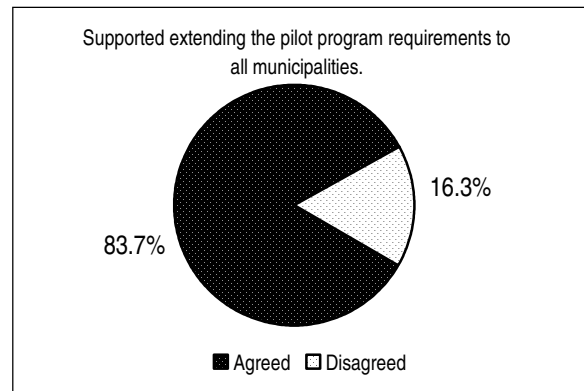
Six (6) of eleven (11) responding to the question expressed support for the pilot program extension as a statewide mandate, with the Registrars indicating that in a small town it doesn't matter. In conclusion, the impact of the program in a small town such as Kent appears to be minimal. A detailed summary of the survey responses from Kent is found in Appendix Z.

VI. Recommendations

When the survey responses are considered in their totality, the Commission is led to the inescapable conclusions that not only was the pilot program successfully implemented, but also it achieved its major objectives in the municipalities that had reported or suspected absentee voting problems. Approximately three fourths of all responding indicated the program was an improvement over current law and procedures, and the same proportion of participants believed the revised procedures for distribution of absentee ballot applications had a favorable affect on the integrity of the absentee voting process. There was even greater support (approximately 4/5) for the specific components of the program—keeping submitted absentee ballot applications confidential to avoid harassment and misuse, and prohibiting candidates and campaign workers from distributing and assisting with applications for absentee ballots. The program requirements foster public confidence in the absentee voting system, and in the electoral process generally, at a time when voters' confidence in their government has been shaken.

The implementation of the pilot program in the three towns was neither complicated nor costly. The replacement of the candidates and partisan campaign workers in the absentee voting process with a neutral corps of absentee ballot coordinators (ABCs) was viewed generally as much more fair and impartial. With candidates and campaign workers barred from the distribution and assistance of applicants, it was found that only about 30 of the 788 absentee ballot applicants in the three towns combined required assistance, or .038% required assistance. The ABCs at a minimum of cost can easily service such a small number adequately. Indeed the cost of compensating the ABCs in the three towns combined was less \$2600. And although the favorable impact on the integrity of the process was less of a factor in the small town, the cost was equally minimal (Kent-\$75). Towns should be able to prescribe their own number of ABCs, provided there is a minimum of two from different political parties. Recruitment of qualified ABCs by the registrars didn't pose significant concerns and, with increased publicity and more involvement of community groups, can be altogether ameliorated. In towns where registrars are part-time, the Commission recommends that the town clerks supervise and appoint the ABCs, with recommendations from the registrars, but that there be teams of ABCs from different political parties jointly rendering assistance to applicants. The telephone verification process that ABCs performed when lists of potential applicants from candidates were provided to them can be streamlined. The program was not tested for a primary, and the division of the ABCs can be accomplished in much the same manner and proportion that the registrar appoints poll worker for the primary. But this fine-tuning of the program should be simple and straightforward. The core components of the pilot program are sound and adjudging by the recent experience, workable.

Finally, there was a very positive response to the survey question asked of whether the respondent would support or oppose the extension of the absentee voting pilot project procedural requirements as a statewide mandate for all municipalities. Forty one (41) of the forty nine (49) responding, or **83.7% support the extension of the pilot program requirements to all municipalities.** The member town clerks and registrars who comprised the subcommittee on evaluations also expressed that sentiment of strong support. The Commission agrees wholeheartedly with the subcommittee and the participants in this experiment in democracy. Accordingly, it is the recommendation of the State Elections Enforcement Commission that the components of the pilot program for absentee voting reform, as prescribed in Public Act No. 03-227, be enacted by the 2004 General Assembly for all elections and primaries conducted in all municipalities beginning in 2005





Substitute House Bill No. 6533

Public Act No. 03-227

***AN ACT ESTABLISHING A PILOT PROGRAM FOR REFORMING THE
ABSENTEE BALLOT PROCESS TO PREVENT FRAUD AND ABUSE.***

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective from passage*) (a) As used in this section:

(1) "Commission" means the State Elections Enforcement Commission; and

(2) "Designee" means (A) a person who is caring for an absentee ballot applicant because of the applicant's illness or physical disability, including but not limited to, a licensed physician or a registered or practical nurse, or (B) a member of any such applicant's family, who is designated by an absentee ballot applicant and who consents to such designation.

(b) Notwithstanding any provision of title 9 of the general statutes, the State Elections Enforcement Commission shall establish a pilot program for absentee voting at the municipal elections and primaries held in three municipalities in 2003. The commission shall notify municipalities of the opportunity to participate in the pilot program and shall select three municipalities to participate, provided the legislative body of each such municipality or, in the case of a municipality in which the legislative body is a town meeting, the board of selectmen, consents to such participation. In making such selections, the commission shall rank all municipalities from highest population to lowest population, and select one municipality in the highest third of such ranking, one municipality in the middle third of such ranking, and one municipality in the lowest third of such ranking.

(c) The provisions of chapter 145 of the general statutes shall apply in each municipality participating in the pilot program, except that:

- (1) Only municipal clerks, registrars of voters and absentee ballot coordinators appointed by registrars of voters may issue absentee ballot applications;
- (2) Such officials may issue absentee ballot applications only to persons who (A) request such applications for themselves, (B) have been identified by candidates or political parties as potential absentee voters, or (C) are designees;
- (3) For a municipal election, each registrar of voters shall appoint at least one absentee ballot coordinator for each two hundred persons who voted by absentee ballot in the most recent municipal election. For a municipal primary, each registrar of voters shall appoint at least one absentee ballot coordinator for each two hundred persons who voted by absentee ballot in the most recent municipal primary. A registrar of voter's appointment of an absentee ballot coordinator shall not be effective until the registrar files the appointment with the municipal clerk;
- (4) Absentee ballot coordinators serving in a municipality shall be residents of such municipality (A) who apply for such positions, or (B) whose names are submitted by candidates or slates of candidates at the election or primary or by political parties. Absentee ballot coordinators may not be municipal employees or members of a town committee or be employed by, or volunteer for, any campaign or political party;
- (5) Absentee ballot coordinators may be compensated by the municipalities appointing the coordinators and shall receive training in absentee voting procedures by the appointing registrar or registrars of voters and be sworn to the faithful performance of their duties as election officials, in accordance with the provisions of section 9-231 of the general statutes;
- (6) (A) Except as provided in subparagraph (B) of this subdivision, only absentee ballot coordinators may be present and provide assistance to an applicant in completing an absentee ballot application outside of the office of a registrar of voters or a municipal clerk. In the case of a municipal election, two absentee ballot coordinators of different political parties, and in the case of a primary, two absentee ballot coordinators representing competing slates or candidates in the primary, shall jointly provide such assistance to an applicant residing in the municipality who requests it. Each coordinator who provides such assistance shall sign the application in the space provided. One or both of such coordinators shall deliver the completed application to the municipal clerk not later than two business days after the date of completion of the application. This section shall not apply to supervised voting at institutions under section 9-159q or 9-159r of the general statutes; and

(B) A designee of an ill or physically disabled applicant may also be present and provide assistance to an applicant in completing an absentee ballot application. The persons listed in subsection (a) of section 9-140b of the general statutes may also assist in the return of absentee ballot applications;

(7) Each absentee ballot coordinator shall account to the municipal clerk for blank absentee ballot applications issued by the coordinator;

(8) When a municipal clerk or a registrar of voters provides assistance to an absentee ballot applicant in the office or the clerk or registrar, such official shall also sign the application; and

(9) The list of absentee ballot applicants who have executed applications shall remain confidential until the third business day before an election or primary.

(d) The State Elections Enforcement Commission shall have the power to enforce the provisions of this section to the same extent as the commission has the power to enforce provisions of election statutes under section 9-7b of the general statutes.

(e) After the municipal elections and primaries held in 2003, the State Elections Enforcement Commission shall survey election officials and participants in the three municipalities participating in the pilot program for absentee voting. Not later than January 15, 2004, the commission shall submit a report on its findings and recommendations concerning the pilot program to the joint standing committee of the General Assembly having cognizance of matters relating to elections.

Approved July 9, 2003

OLR Bill Analysis

sHB 6533 (as amended by House "A")*

AN ACT ESTABLISHING A PILOT PROGRAM FOR REFORMING THE ABSENTEE BALLOT PROCESS TO PREVENT FRAUD AND ABUSE

SUMMARY:

This bill requires the State Elections Enforcement Commission (SEEC) to establish a pilot program for absentee voting in three municipalities that agree to participate for the 2003 municipal elections and primaries and report on its results to the Government Administration and Elections (GAE) Committee. The bill includes the program specifications, including the creation of the position of absentee ballot coordinator (ABC). Registrars of voters appoint volunteers or nominees but not municipal employees or party or campaign workers. The bill limits the authority to distribute absentee ballot applications to town clerks and registrars of voters, who can currently distribute them, and the new ABCs.

Under the bill, only clerks, registrars, ABCs, or designees of an applicant can help an applicant complete the form, and two ABCs must be present to provide assistance jointly. The bill requires ABCs to account for blank applications and makes the list of applicants confidential until the Thursday before a Tuesday election or primary.

The statutory requirements of the state's absentee ballot laws apply in the selected towns, with the exception of the procedures established for this program.

*House Amendment "A" requires that towns must consent before participating and permits, rather than requires, ABCs to receive compensation.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

PROGRAM TOWNS

The bill requires the SEEC to notify three towns of the opportunity to participate in the program. Towns may participate if the legislative body (or the board of selectmen in a town whose legislative body is the town meeting) consents. The commission must select one large, one medium-sized, and one small town, based on a population ranking of the towns in the state.

ABSENTEE BALLOT APPLICATIONS

Current law allows anyone to pick up and distribute an application or ask a town clerk or registrar to mail one to any qualified prospective absentee voter. The bill limits the distribution to the clerks, registrars, and ABCs and permits them to issue an application only to people who (1) request one for themselves, (2) have been identified by a candidate or political party as potential absentee voters, or (3) are designees of potential absentee voters. The bill defines a "designee" as a family member or caregiver (including a doctor or nurse) of someone who is ill or disabled who has been named as a designee and accepts the responsibility.

The bill requires a town clerk or registrar of voters who helps an absentee ballot applicant complete the application in the office to sign the application. ABCs who provide assistance must also sign the application. Current law requires any person who assists another in completing an application to sign it and print his name, address, and telephone number.

Under the bill, the list of absentee ballot applicants remains confidential until the third business day before the election or primary.

ABSENTEE BALLOT COORDINATORS

Appointment

The bill authorizes registrars of voters to appoint ABCs and file a notice of appointment with the town clerk. Each participating town registrar must appoint at least one for every 200 people who voted by absentee ballot at the last municipal election or primary, as the case may be.

Any town resident, other than a town employee, member of a town committee, or a campaign or party volunteer or employee, can apply for appointment as an ABC or be submitted for appointment by a candidate, slate of candidates, or party.

Duties

Each ABC must account for each application he receives from the clerk and issues.

Under the bill, only ABCs or a voter's designee may be present and provide assistance when an applicant completes the application form outside of the clerk's or registrar's office. If ABCs provide assistance for an election, two of them from different political parties must help the applicant; in the case of a primary, two ABCs representing different slates or candidates must do so. Both ABCs must sign the application. Within two business days, one or both must

deliver the application to the town clerk. The bill permits those who can return an absentee ballot also to return the application. They are the applicant, his designee, or immediate family member.

Registrars of voters must train the people appointed as ABCs and swear them to perform their duties faithfully as election officials. Towns may pay the ABCs.

ELECTIONS ENFORCEMENT COMMISSION

The bill gives the commission authority to establish the pilot program and select the participating towns. It may exercise its existing authority and powers to enforce the pilot program's provisions.

After the election, the SEEC must survey the program's election officials and participants in the three towns and report its findings and recommendations to the GAE Committee by January 15, 2004.

BACKGROUND

Legislative History

The House referred the bill to the Planning and Development and Appropriations committees on April 30 and May 13, respectively. The committees favorably reported the bill without change.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Government Administration and Elections Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 15 Nay 1

Planning and Development Committee

Joint Favorable Report

Yea 17 Nay 0

Appropriations Committee

Joint Favorable Report

Yea 27 Nay 15

Appendix C

Small

	<i>Town</i>	<i>Population</i>
1.	Union	693
2.	Canaan	1,081
3.	Warren	1,254
4.	Cornwall	1,434
5.	Colebrook	1,471
6.	Scotland	1,556
7.	Eastford	1,618
8.	Norfolk	1,660
9.	Hampton	1,758
10.	Bridgewater	1,824
11.	Franklin	1,835
12.	Hartland	2,012
13.	Lyme	2,016
14.	Roxbury	2,136
15.	Chaplin	2,250
16.	Morris	2,301
17.	Bozrah	2,357
18.	Voluntown	2,528
19.	Goshen	2,697
20.	Kent	2,858
21.	Sharon	2,968
22.	Sprague	2,971
23.	Andover	3,036
24.	Sterling	3,099
25.	North Canaan	3,350
26.	Bethlehem	3,422
27.	Barkhamsted	3,494
28.	Washington	3,596
29.	Chester	3,743
30.	Pomfret	3,798
31.	Sherman	3,827
32.	Salem	3,858
33.	Salisbury	3,977
34.	Lisbon	4,069
35.	Ashford	4,098
36.	Middlefield	4,203
37.	Deep River	4,610
38.	Preston	4,688
39.	Canterbury	4,692
40.	East Granby	4,745
41.	Columbia	4,971
42.	North Stonington	4,991
43.	Bolton	5,017
44.	Bethany	5,040
45.	Beacon Falls	5,246
46.	Harwinton	5,283
47.	Marlborough	5,709
48.	Willington	5,959
49.	Killingworth	6,018
50.	New Hartford	6,088
51.	Westbrook	6,292
52.	Middlebury	6,451
53.	Essex	6,505
54.	Durham	6,627
55.	Lebanon	6,907
56.	Haddam	7,157

Medium

	<i>Town</i>	<i>Population</i>
57.	Brooklyn	7,173
58.	Woodstock	7,221
59.	Easton	7,272
60.	Old Lyme	7,406
61.	Thomaston	7,503
62.	Burlington	8,190
63.	Redding	8,270
64.	Litchfield	8,316
65.	East Haddam	8,333
66.	Hebron	8,610
67.	Prospect	8,707
68.	Portland	8,732
69.	Canton	8,840
70.	Thompson	8,878
71.	Woodbridge	8,983
72.	Putnam	9,002
73.	Woodbury	9,198
74.	East Windsor	9,818
75.	Oxford	9,821
76.	Weston	10,037
77.	Granby	10,347
78.	Old Saybrook	10,367
79.	Somers	10,417
80.	Winchester	10,664
81.	Griswold	10,807
82.	Stafford	11,307
83.	Coventry	11,504
84.	Plymouth	11,634
85.	Windsor Locks	12,043
86.	Derby	12,391
87.	Cromwell	12,871
88.	Ellington	12,921
89.	Clinton	13,094
90.	Tolland	13,146
91.	Orange	13,233
92.	East Hampton	13,352
93.	Suffield	13,552
94.	North Branford	13,906
95.	New Fairfield	13,953
96.	Colchester	14,551
97.	Plainfield	14,619
98.	Ledyard	14,687
99.	Wolcott	15,215
100.	Seymour	15,454
101.	Brookfield	15,664
102.	Avon	15,832
103.	Killingly	16,472
104.	Plainville	17,328
105.	Wilton	17,633
106.	Madison	17,858
107.	Stonington	17,906
108.	Rocky Hill	17,966
109.	Bethel	18,067
110.	East Lyme	18,118
111.	Berlin	18,215
112.	Montville	18,546
113.	Ansonia	18,554

Large

	<i>Town</i>	<i>Population</i>
114.	Southbury	18,567
115.	Waterford	19,152
116.	Monroe	19,247
117.	New Canaan	19,395
118.	Bloomfield	19,587
119.	Darien	19,607
120.	Mansfield	20,720
121.	Guilford	21,398
122.	Watertown	21,661
123.	Windham	22,857
124.	North Haven	23,035
125.	Simsbury	23,234
126.	Farmington	23,641
127.	Ridgefield	23,643
128.	South Windsor	24,412
129.	Newtown	25,031
130.	New London	25,671
131.	Westport	25,749
132.	Wethersfield	26,271
133.	New Milford	27,121
134.	Vernon	28,063
135.	East Haven	28,189
136.	Windsor	28,237
137.	Cheshire	28,543
138.	Branford	28,683
139.	Newington	29,306
140.	Naugatuck	30,989
141.	Glastonbury	31,876
142.	Trumbull	34,243
143.	Torrington	35,202
144.	Norwich	36,117
145.	Shelton	38,101
146.	Southington	39,728
147.	Groton	39,907
148.	Wallingford	43,026
149.	Middletown	43,167
150.	Enfield	45,212
151.	East Hartford	49,575
152.	Stratford	49,976
153.	Milford	52,305
154.	West Haven	52,360
155.	Manchester	54,740
156.	Hamden	56,913
157.	Fairfield	57,340
158.	Meriden	58,244
159.	Bristol	60,062
160.	Greenwich	61,101
161.	West Hartford	63,589
162.	New Britain	71,538
163.	Danbury	74,848
164.	Norwalk	82,951
165.	Waterbury	107,271
166.	Stamford	117,083
167.	Hartford	121,578
168.	New Haven	123,626
169.	Bridgeport	139,529



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
STATE ELECTIONS ENFORCEMENT COMMISSION
20 Trinity Street - Suite 101 • Hartford, Connecticut 06106 - 1628

September 8, 2003

Honorable James W. Morrissey
Chairman
West Haven City Council
305 Country Hill Drive
West Haven, CT

Re: Re: Absentee Voting Reform Pilot Program for 2003 Municipal Elections

Dear Chairman Morrissey:

On behalf of the State Elections Enforcement Commission, I am writing to urge the West Haven City Council to approve the City's participation in this pilot program for the upcoming general election. The details of the program are contained in legislation enacted overwhelmingly by the General Assembly and codified in Public Act 03-227, entitled "***An Act Establishing a Pilot Program for Reforming the Absentee Ballot Process to Prevent Fraud and Abuse.***" The legislation was supported by the entire legislative delegation from West Haven. Representative Dargan was especially supportive in our efforts to pass this legislation creating this program.

The pilot program is effective for the 2003 municipal elections, and therefore time is of the essence. The Commission must select three municipalities to participate in the program, one from the upper third in population, one from the middle third, and one from the smallest third of municipalities. Kent and Winsted have signified their consent to participate as the small and mid sized towns, respectively. The Commission is eager to have West Haven participate in this program as it has a history of high absentee ballot usage, and there have been recent allegations of abuses in this process.

The intent of the pilot program is to gather evidence on whether this proposed method of reform is one that is workable for Connecticut cities and towns before deciding whether to recommend it to the General Assembly. The legislative body of the municipality must consent to participate in the pilot before the Commission can designate the municipality.

Some of the details of the new procedures are as follows. The persons who could distribute absentee ballot applications would be limited to the Town Clerk, Registrars of Voters, and Absentee Ballot Coordinators. The Registrars would appoint the Absentee Ballot Coordinators. These ABCs could not be town committee members, municipal

employees or working for a campaign or political party, to ensure their neutrality in the process. Candidates competing in the election will have an opportunity to submit names to the Registrars of qualified ABCs who are willing to serve. Training of the ABCs would be the responsibility of the Registrars as is currently the case with poll workers, but the Commission would provide training to the Registrars and Town Clerk in the requirements of the program. If the registrars so desire, we would assist them to train the ABCs. If assistance were needed by a potential applicant in the completion of the absentee ballot application, two ABCs of different political parties would render such assistance jointly, which is very similar to the present system for supervised absentee voting at nursing homes. Lastly, the list of absentee ballot applicants shall remain confidential until the third business day before the election to ensure that absentee voters have the same privacy while voting, as do other voters who vote at the polling place.

One major change of procedure that the pilot legislation makes is that candidates, campaign and party workers would be *prohibited* from distributing applications. While they could continue to identify who may need them, they would provide such information to the Town Clerk who would have the ABCs follow up on the request. The Commission wishes to emphasize that ***no one who is eligible to vote absentee will be denied an application or ballot.*** Persons who do not require assistance (the vast majority) may continue to obtain an application directly from the Town Clerk or Registrars of Voters. The Registrars may decide to submit all their requests to the Town Clerk, and thus centralize the process even further.

The cost of the program is dependent upon whether the City decides to compensate the ABCs for their time. The legislation does not mandate such compensation, and so the City may do so if it so desires. Our recommendation is to afford them compensation that is similar to that paid to poll workers or the persons who are already supervising absentee ballots at the nursing homes. Based upon information from the Town Clerk, West Haven will require 8 ABCs, 4 Democrats and 4 Republicans. If compensation is paid to the ABCs, we anticipate that the cost of implementing this program will be no greater than \$2500. I have a scheduled meeting with the Town Clerk and Registrars this Friday, September 12, and will be in a better position to provide a more detailed cost estimate following that meeting.

The Commission believes West Haven is well suited to participate in the pilot program. Absentee ballot usage is generally high, and there have been issues raised in the past concerning the process. In addition Mayor Borer has expressed his interest and support of West Haven's participation in the program.

The Commission believes that the methodology in the pilot program will go a long way to protect the integrity of absentee ballots and therefore the election process generally. I am most anxious to attend a meeting of the City Council as soon as possible to provide a more detailed explanation and to discuss further West Haven's participation in this program.

Thank you for your cooperation. I have enclosed materials that further explain the program, and eagerly look forward to meeting with the City Council at its earliest opportunity.

Very truly yours,

Jeffrey B. Garfield
Executive Director and General
Counsel

Enclosures

- c. Mayor H. Richard Borer, Jr.
Deborah Collins, City and Town Clerk
Mary Marino, Democratic Registrar of Voters
Jo Ann Callegari, Republican Registrar of Voters



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
STATE ELECTIONS ENFORCEMENT COMMISSION
20 Trinity Street - Suite 101 • Hartford, Connecticut 06106 - 1628

**Statement of Jeffrey B. Garfield, Executive Director and General Counsel of the State
Elections Enforcement Commission Concerning Public Act No. 03-227, and West Haven's
Participation in a Pilot Program to Reform the Absentee Ballot Process**

Good evening Chairman Morrissey and members of the West Haven City Council. My name is Jeffrey B. Garfield, and I am the Executive Director and General Counsel of the State Elections Enforcement Commission. I am delighted to be here tonight to hopefully explain Public Act 03-227, and to urge your favorable support of a resolution intended to allow West Haven to participate in this experiment with absentee voting procedures as the representative of the large populated municipalities. I also want to thank the Mayor for his enthusiastic support of the program, and for convening this special meeting.

First, I would like to briefly explain why the State Elections Enforcement Commission proposed this legislation to the General Assembly. It has become evident to us after more than two decades of investigating alleged abuses in the absentee voting process that these abuses (1) continue to persist despite our efforts to redress violations through appropriate sanctions, and (2) arise from a lack of adequate controls in the absentee ballot application process. In the past several years, an elected official lost his office and his job as a result of absentee ballot violations uncovered by the Commission. In addition, during the last year, we have referred evidence of criminal violations of the statutes to the Chief State's Attorney for prosecution involving officials in New Haven and Hartford. We have assessed thousands of dollars in civil fines and imposed various other sanctions to redress violations. Yet, abuses still persist; and the integrity of our voting process has been adversely affected. The Commission believes that absentee voting abuses are the number one problem in our voting process.

Our experience suggests that the problems begin with a process that allows candidates, campaign and party committee members and workers to go door-to-door distributing applications or to distribute them en masse, coupled with the fact that applications are open to public inspection. This process has resulted in persons using absentee ballots that are not qualified to do so, and worse, to intimidation to vote for or against a candidate, as was the case in Hartford. The absentee voter is entitled to the same right of privacy when casting his or her ballot, as the voter in the polling place who draws the curtain. The pilot program provides greater assurance that the voter's privacy will be protected.

Our experience has shown that groups targeted for the absentee ballot vote tend to be lonely and vulnerable, and may also be recipients of some form of public assistance. They are seniors, lower income and non-English speaking voters who do not appreciate the distinction between an application and a ballot. They are entitled to the same privacy rights as other voters. Public Act 03-227 attempts to address these issues by establishing a program where those applicants needing assistance in the completion of an application or ballot are given non-partisan or neutral assistance.

You may ask why the Commission proposed this legislation as a pilot program rather than applying its principles uniformly to all 169 towns. Simply stated, we did not know whether this would be the perfect solution to the problem. As with the introduction of new voting technologies, we felt it would be more appropriate to test it out before proceeding full steam ahead with a full program. The General Assembly agreed. Moreover, this legislation was approved by 3 different legislative committees, and finally by a near unanimous vote in the House and a unanimous vote in the Senate. It was supported by the Chief State's Attorney, Secretary of the State, Town Clerk's Association and Registrars of Voters Association of Connecticut, and other groups interested in making our electoral process a better one. Equally as significant, the legislation enjoyed unanimous support from the members of West Haven's own legislative delegation.

Components of the Pilot

The legislation creating the pilot program provides some general parameters that I will address. But let me say at the outset, the State Elections Enforcement Commission is committed to the successful implementation of the program and to providing the West Haven Registrars of Voters and Town Clerk with proper instructions and advice, concerning the administration of the program. Moreover, if you decide to be our large city participant in the pilot, and we hope that you will, I will personally act as the Commission's liaison with the Town Clerk and Registrars.

The basic components are comparable to the system already in place for supervised balloting at nursing homes. First, the pilot towns will use a revised absentee ballot application form that has been approved by the Secretary of the State. The unique application form provides a greater means of control and accountability. No one other than the Town Clerk, Registrars of Voters and the Absentee Ballot Coordinators (ABCs) are authorized to distribute applications under the pilot legislation. Accordingly, candidates, campaign and party workers will not be allowed to distribute applications. It is my understanding that in West Haven, Registrars do not now distribute applications, but rather instruct that requests be made to the Town Clerk. If the Registrars want to continue to refer requests to the Town Clerk, that is fine with the Commission and permitted under the legislation.

If this is agreed to, the only additional duty that the Registrars of Voters have under the pilot is that they appoint the Absentee Ballot Coordinators, or ABC's, who would visit applicants who need assistance in completing their applications, submit the applications to the Town Clerk who will issue the ballots, and the ABC's may return to assist in the completion of ballots, if needed. Applications distributed in this manner shall be accounted for by the ABC's and all filed applications shall remain confidential within the Town Clerk's Office until the Friday before the election or primary to better ensure the voter's right to secrecy and prevent undue interference from campaign or party workers.

The Commission believes that ***no one who is eligible for and requests an absentee ballot shall be denied one***. It is not the intent of the legislation to restrict balloting but rather to protect the integrity of these ballots and therefore the electoral outcomes.

To provide assurance that no one who rightfully uses an absentee ballot is denied one, we suggest that the program be structured to have the ABCs initiate contact within those multi-family dwellings where there is a high incidence of past absentee ballot usage. I personally met with your Registrars and Town Clerk last week, and it is my understanding that there are 3 such senior housing complexes in the city that have historically used absentee ballots. Therefore, I would suggest that the ABCs initiate contact with the residents of these buildings using the tenant association liaison or building manager. The ABCs may also visit any other dwelling identified by candidates or political parties as inhabited by persons in need of assistance in completing their applications.

Of course, the legislation does not prevent an able individual from requesting his own application from the Town Clerk or for a family member such as a student in college. These persons do not need assistance, and the ABCs would not visit them. In addition a family member who is caring for an ill or disabled voter, may obtain an application for the individual and continue to assist in the completion of the application and ballot of that individual. The main thrust of the legislation is to preclude candidates, campaign and party workers from being involved in the distribution of absentee ballot applications—and to substitute a neutral corps of ABCs to ensure their voting rights are properly protected.

The legislation defines who cannot serve as an ABC—such as a town committee member, municipal employee or campaign or party worker. We have prescribed an application form to be used to apply for the position of ABC, and will support the Registrars efforts to recruit qualified individuals. The pool of potential ABCs may include those who already conduct supervised voting at convalescent homes in the city, poll workers, college students, members of the League of Women Voters, or other groups that have a reputation for non-partisanship and an interest in fair elections. Certainly candidates should be encouraged to suggest names to the Registrars of qualified individuals who are willing to serve, and the Registrars are encouraged to appoint qualified persons from among those lists submitted to foster confidence and fairness in the administration of the program. It is also important for ABCs to be representative of the city's diverse population.

Finally, I want to address the issue of cost. The legislation provides that the ABCs *may* be compensated by the municipality for their services. Accordingly, you are permitted to make these positions strictly voluntary. Charities and indeed political campaigns have thrived on the good work of volunteers. Yet, I believe that to maximize the opportunity to recruit good people, compensation is a powerful incentive. Unfortunately, the State can't help you in that regard, as no funding was provided for this purpose. However, the Commission will permit political campaign funds raised by candidates, political action committees and town committees to be contributed to the municipality to defray all or a portion of compensation paid to the ABCs.

To determine the cost of the ABCs, you must first decide how many will be necessary. The legislation provides that each Registrar is required to appoint one ABC per 200 absentee voters in the last municipal election. As there were 641 absentee voters in 2001, that would mean a minimum of 3 per registrar or a total of 6 for the entire city. That number is very manageable.

Of course, the City Council is permitted to add to that number. However, our cost estimate that assumes 6 ABCs who would be paid a stipend for their service to the City. The cost estimate includes additional postage for mailing applications that the Town Clerk will be required to do, as candidates and campaigns will be unable to do so. That number also we feel is generous, and contemplates virtually all of the applications being mailed out as opposed to persons stopping to the office to pick them up.

The rate of compensation paid to the ABCs will also determine the cost. Since poll workers are paid on a per diem basis as are those who supervise absentee balloting at nursing homes, I am suggesting a stipend of \$250 be paid to each ABC. Accordingly, we estimate that the whole program can be implemented for less than \$2000, including the cost of additional postage and miscellaneous supplies.

In conclusion, we feel the benefits of participation far outweigh the small costs involved. The benefits include providing your absentee voters with more privacy and less intrusion, and your candidates with a more level playing field; and to all of your citizens a greater assurance in the integrity of the electoral outcome this November.

Why West Haven

Finally, you may inquire why West Haven should participate in the pilot. Your town clerk and registrars of voters support the program and are enthusiastic about the City's participation.

West Haven residents tend to use absentee ballots at a high rate. There have been concerns voiced over the integrity of absentee ballots in the past. Participation in this program will send a strong message to the West Haven voters that its City Council wants to be part of the solution. Again, this is only a pilot program and it will ultimately be up to the General Assembly whether this program should be considered for all municipalities in the future.

The Commission urges your adoption of a resolution that will allow West Haven to participate in the pilot program on absentee voting reform.

Projected Costs of Implementation of
Absentee Ballot Pilot Program
for
West Haven's 2003 Municipal Election

ABC Compensation	6 @ \$250 =	\$1500.
Additional Postage	600 x .37 =	222.
Miscellaneous Supplies		<u>90.</u>
Total		\$1812.

**MINUTES OF THE
ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON
IMPLEMENTATION OF
ABSENTEE VOTING PILOT PROGRAM
(PUBLIC ACT 03-227)
JULY 14, 2003**

I. Introduction of Members

Mr. Garfield called the meeting to order at 10:05. He thanked the attendees for their participation at the meeting to assist in delineating the details of the absentee voting pilot program. The attendees then introduced themselves.

Those present at the table were State Elections Enforcement Commission's staff members Messers. Jeffrey B. Garfield, Albert P. Lenge, Ms. Joan M. Andrews and Ms. Lois E. Blackburn. Representing the Town Clerks were Joseph Camposeo, Manchester, Leslie Cotton, Southington, George Buckbee, New Milford and Sheila Anson, Washington. Representing the Registrars of Voters were Lisa Parziale and George Comer of Bridgeport, Judy Beaudreau, Vernon, Janis Murtha, South Windsor, Rae Tramontano, New Haven, Patty Mulhall, Waterbury, and Toni Soboleski, Meriden. Also present and representing the Center for Policy Alternatives was Bettye Jo Pakulis, representing Common Cause was Andy Sauer, representing Democracy Works was Americo Santiago. Attorney Ted Bromley was present from the Secretary of the State's Office and Representative Christopher Caruso from the GAE Committee. Invited but unable to attend were GAE leaders, Senator Don DeFronzo, Representative Jim O'Rourke, Senator Andrew Roraback and Representative Livvy Floren. Also invited and unable to attend were Town Clerks Sandra Hutton, Middletown, Joan Gerdson, Mansfield and Enid Oresman, President of League of Women Voters of CT.

II. Background of Legislation

Mr. Garfield summarized the background of the pilot program. The SEEC feels that there have been persistent abuses of the absentee ballot process. SEEC proposed the pilot program to examine whether the reform was workable and solved problems before applying it to all to the towns. The bill received broad bi-partisan legislative support, with the very instrumental help from Representative Caruso. It was also supported by the Registrars of Voters, Town Clerks, Chief State's Attorney, Secretary of the State and many advocacy groups.

III. Recruitment of Participant Towns

Mr. Garfield explained the provisions of PA 03-227, and that the SEEC was required to rank towns by population, and to designate only one town in the lower third, one in the middle third, and one in the highest third of population. After Mr. Garfield made two separate presentations, the City Council of Bridgeport voted on July 7, to participate in the pilot program representing the big city participant. This will be formally ratified at the July 16, 2003 meeting of the SEEC. Bridgeport met the profile for a big city to be tested.

Absentee voting statistics were compiled for small and mid-sized towns from the last election. While Berlin satisfied an initial threshold, it was determined not to fit the criteria after Mr. Garfield met with their town clerks and registrars. Rocky Hill was then considered in the middle strata. However after discussion with their election officials, it was no longer considered. The two mid-sized towns presently under possible consideration are Cromwell and Portland. Also on the radar for a mid-sized town is Wolcott.

Mr. Garfield identified the factors to be considered in recruitment of pilot towns: (1) High absentee ballot usage coupled with senior housing or low income public subsidized housing; Non English speaking; (2) desire and commitment of local election officials; (3) likelihood of spirited election or primary; (4) history or suspicion of abuse; (5) interest by legislative body in joining the program; and (6) participating towns be geographically and politically balanced.

The program must not be a fiscal hardship to the town; the legislation permits the municipality to compensate the ABCs. Mr. Garfield suggested that campaign funds could be donated by candidates, PACs and parties to defray expenses to towns for ABC coverage. Some attendees opposed this. They feel that it would not be a good idea to put politics into the mix. Candidates, political parties and PACs are not allowed to make ABC appointments. This is the exclusive job of the Registrars of Voters jointly. The matter of pressure put on the ROV by candidates and PACs was discussed. The consensus around the table was that it is not a good idea to allow political campaigns and PACs to blindly contribute to the town to defray cost for the pilot program. Representative Caruso said he would be in favor of contributing with no strings attached.

The procedure for choosing municipalities to participate is the following: The State Elections Enforcement Commission will contact the Town Clerk and ROVs to determine this level of interest and whether the municipality exhibits some of the criteria identified. After examination of the criteria, there will be a site meeting followed by a letter to the Town Council or Board of Selectman inviting them to participate. Mr. Garfield will be the staff liaison for Bridgeport, Mr. Lenge will be the mid-sized town liaison, and Ms. Andrews will be the small town liaison. If the town board approves the program, it will be ratified by the

SEEC at its next meeting. August 9th is the deadline for the town to signify willingness to join and be part of the pilot.

Ms. Andrews stated that historically the problem with absentee ballot voting fraud occurs mostly in the large towns, however the impact of the fix will be felt in the small town as well. The town of Washington was mentioned as under consideration to participate in the small town population category. It was agreed that none of the towns that are included in the pilot program for new voting technology can be considered in this pilot program.

IV. Role of Election Officials

A. The Role of SEEC

The State Elections Enforcement Commission will be responsible for the overall administration of the pilot and provide assistance, support and ideas on the recruitment of the ABC's, including determining the number that will be needed in the three towns. The SEEC will train the ROV's who then train the ABCs. The Commission will handle complaints concerning the administration of the pilot and will perform the evaluations at the end of the program.

B. The Town Clerk

The Town Clerk will remain essentially the same as under the current law, which is the distribution of AB applications directly to the applicant, to a family member or designee, to the ROVs for distribution. The town clerk would also distribute applications to the ABCs that are designated by the ROVs. The participants discussed ways to maintain accounting and records of the ABCs. Several ideas were discussed. It was suggested that a special color ballot application for the pilot towns be used, and there was a consensus that this is a good idea. The confirmation process and accountability was essential. The logging and stamping should indicate who and when an application was distributed. All agreed that a log should be kept by the Town Clerks and ROVs recording requests for applications, when and to whom the application was mailed. It was also agreed that the ABCs should also keep a detailed log of contacts with the applicants who requested assistance, and who they have assisted in filling out the application. It was decided that the ROVs, Town Clerks and ABCs will all stamp and log all AB application transactions for complete record keeping in order to ensure accountability and that no one other than those officials have authority to distribute applications for absentee ballots to any person. Mr. Garfield stated that since the completed AB applications are confidential, the internal logs will also be kept confidential.

C. Registrars of Voters

The most important duty of the Registrars of Voters is to appoint honest and impartial ABCs. There is no maximum number of ABC's that can be appointed, only a minimum. As in the case of poll workers, candidates may submit names of possible ABCs, but there will be no guarantee that the person will be appointed. The success of the pilot program will depend on the public and the candidates' satisfaction with the appointment of the ABCs. The Registrars of Voters will file the appointments of ABCs with the Town Clerk. They will train and supervise them on a day-to-day basis. There must be public education of the new procedures.

D. ABC's

The ABCs will be responding to persons identified by the candidates and political parties as in need of AB ballot applications and/or assistance in completing an AB application. They will provide the forms and/or assistance jointly, both in a primary and in an election. They must co-sign applications where assistance is rendered, and keep a log of all contact with the applicants. The completed application must be returned within two-business days to the Town Clerks. All unused applications should be returned to the Town Clerk. It is currently a common practice for the campaigns to identify persons that are most likely to need assistance. Using the candidates' list, ABCs would initially contact potential users by phone to verify they need an application, and then ask if the user will need assistance. If no phone contacted can be made, a home visit will be in order. It was discussed if the ABCs should ask the question "Do you need an AB ballot application and will you need assistance with it?" It was mentioned that some elderly might be reluctant to have a new assister and to accept assistance from an unknown person. There was the discussion of how to educate the applicant on the eligibility to vote AB. The discussion continued of how and what to question those who request AB applications. When a request for assistance in completion of an application is made to the Town Clerk, he will assign it to an ABC. It was asked if the ABC has a duty to refer to the Commission anyone who completes an application but does not appear eligible to vote absentee ballot. Mr. Garfield said that ineligibility is not currently a basis for challenging an absentee ballot. It was suggested that a cover sheet be included in the AB application stating, in simple terms, the proper reasons for voting by absentee ballot. All agreed that ABCs should wear a name tag to identify themselves as official ABCs, and carry a letter of introduction on ROV official stationary on site visits. It was discussed that they co-sign applications after assistance is given and if assistance is refused, this will also be documented. All agreed that the ABC's would be furnished with a stamp for the documentation of applications.

The application for Employment as Absentee Ballot Coordinator was discussed. A draft application was included the meeting packet. A few additions to the application questions were discussed. The questions: “Are you a personal friend or relative of a candidate seeking office?”, “Are you a personal friend or relative of the Registrars of Voters or Town Clerk?”, and “Can you be impartial?” were added to the list of questions to be added for final review. Social Security information was to be deleted from application, and a refinement of the labor union membership question was agreed to.

V. RECRUITMENT OF ABC’s

The goal is to ensure integrity and fairness of the process. Mr. Garfield offered the following goal: To obtain a sufficient number of eligible people, representative of the community, who the candidates and the voters will be satisfied are honest, impartial and disinterested. There was some discussion about whether the ABCs should be disinterested. Who should the ABC’s represent and how many will be needed. One for every 200 absentee ballot voter in the last election, 20 will be needed for Bridgeport, 2 per councilmanic district. The factors to be considered are the cost, need for assistance and the population of the town. The ABC’s must be residents, but do not need to be electors. This will enable the recruitment of high school students. Also suggested as possible candidates for the ABC position would be absentee ballot supervisors. ABC’s may not be municipal employees, Town Committee members, campaign or party workers. They should be representative of the major parties. It is important to the Commission that there be diversity of the ABC pool chosen by the ROV’s as they will be ambassadors of the town, representing the diversity of the municipality. Ensuring candidate input and satisfaction is important for success of the pilot program. The candidate can submit names to be put in the pool of possible recruits. It was suggested that the candidate sign an affidavit stating that their choices do not work for their campaigns. It was suggested that the application include a question asking whether they are a personal friend or relative of one of the candidates. Mr. Garfield said that this could be included on the form, however an affirmative response would not be an automatic disqualifier. The opinions differed by the different towns. Some felt that the ABC will not be needed in their town, some felt that there will be a lot of calls for assistance.

Some suggestions for outreach to recruit a list of ABC’s are:

- League of Women Voters of CT
- NAACP
- Previous Poll workers
- Unemployment Office
- College/High School volunteers
- Chamber of Commerce
- Rotary Club

VI. Application Distribution Process

Mr. Garfield stated that the Town Clerks, Registrars of Voters and the ABCs will be the only people authorized to distribute the AB applications. The party or candidates may identify potential applicants. This information will be forwarded to the ABC's through the Registrars of Voters or the Town Clerk and the ABCs would then verify if persons are in need of the form as well as assistance in completing the form. The ABCs can verify the need via a phone call and/or make a home visit. If there is a high number of housing complexes that request AB applications, a random sampling by site visitation can be made by the ABC's. A log of calls and/or site visits will be kept by the ABCs, and they will stamp applications they provide. When no assistance is rendered the application will be stamped. If assistance is rendered, the application will be cosigned by ABC's.

It was suggested that color coded applications be used for participant towns. Downloading from the internet for these towns would not be possible because of the color coding. A disclaimer should go on SOTS website to alert person in the pilot towns that downloaded applications will be rejected. The SEEC will notify state parties and town chairs of the distribution prohibition.

VII. ABC Assistance Issues

There will be site visits to explain to applicants qualifying reasons for voting by absentee ballot. The applicant must make his own determination of eligibility. Verbal assistance is considered assistance by the ABC, and they must co sign the application in this circumstance. If an ABC needs to recuse himself from this particular elector, a substitute may be called in from a reserve pool of ABCs. All applicants' names will continue to be confidential.

VIII. Do's and Don'ts Checklist for Campaigns

Mr. Garfield reviewed the list of restrictions applicable to the candidates, campaign and party workers in towns taking part in the pilot program:

1. May not distribute AB applications in person or by mail
2. May not solicit a person to vote AB with knowledge he or she is ineligible
3. May not be present when AB is completed
4. May not handle, possess an AB or AB application
5. May not provide stamps or other incentives for voting
6. May engage in door-to-door campaigning and distribute partisan literature.
7. May advise AB voter on how to obtain application
8. May furnish names of possible AB applicants to Town Clerks and Registrars of Voters.
9. May not assist in completion of an AB application or AB.

IX. Publicity of Requirement of Pilot

The matter of the publicity for the pilot program was discussed. Television has a money issue. A workshop in Bridgeport presented by Commission staff liaison co-sponsored by the Registrars and advocates would be a possibility. The suggestions of a media campaign, candidate workshops, use of public libraries, senior complex flyer, Spanish media and Channel 12 news. (Bridgeport)

Before adjournment, Mr. Garfield suggested that three subcommittees should be organized to continue to work on the details of the program. The three subcommittees will be a Forms Subcommittee, Evaluation Subcommittee and a Publicity Subcommittee. Mr. Garfield asked for volunteers for these committees and the following volunteered:

Forms Subcommittee

Jan Murtha, George Buckbee, Judy Beaudreau, Ted Bromley volunteered for this committee and Joan Gerdson name was suggested as a possibly interested participant. This committee will be in charge of designing the Town Clerk's log, ABC's log, the ABC application, do's and don't flyers and cover sheet on eligibility requirements for absentee voting which would be attached to the application for an absentee ballot.

Evaluation Subcommittee

Betty Jo Pakulis, Joseph Composeo, Leslie Cotton, Janis Murtha and Patty Mulhall volunteered to work on this subcommittee.

Publicity Subcommittee

Andy Sauer, Americo Santiago and Rae Tramontano volunteered to work on strategy, plans and the actual publicity for the pilot program.

Mr. Garfield adjourned the meeting at 3:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Lois E. Blackburn
Clerk of the Commission

APPLICATION FOR ABSENTEE BALLOT SOTS 700 Rev 8/8/03 This application is to be returned to the West Haven Town Clerk; Town Hall Town Hall; 355 Main St.; Box 526 West Haven, CT 06516-0526			<div style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 50%; width: 100px; height: 100px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> Embossed Stamp </div>		<i>For Municipal Clerk Use</i>	
					Outer Envelope Serial Number:	
					Date Absentee Ballot Issued:	
This Application is for the: <input type="checkbox"/> September 9, 2003 Primary <input type="checkbox"/> November 4, 2003 Election <i>(Check only one)</i>		If Application is for the September 9, 2003 Primary: <input type="checkbox"/> Republican Primary <input type="checkbox"/> Democratic Primary <i>(Check only one)</i>		Absentee Ballot delivered: <input type="checkbox"/> Mailed <input type="checkbox"/> Hand-delivered <i>(Check only one)</i>		
Name of Applicant <i>(Please Print or type)</i>	Applicant's Date of Birth	Applicant's Voting Residence <i>(No., Street, Town)</i>		Political Subdivision	Voting District	

STATEMENT OF ABSENTEE BALLOT APPLICANT

I the undersigned applicant for absentee ballot believe that I am, or will be, eligible to vote at the election or primary indicated above and that I will be unable to appear in person at my polling place during all of the hours of voting at such election or primary for the reason checked below:

- ☐ My active service in the armed forces.
- ☐ My absence from West Haven during all of the hours of voting.
- ☐ My illness.
- ☐ My physical disability.
- ☐ My religious beliefs that forbid secular activity during all of the hours of voting.
- ☐ My duties as a primary or election official at a polling place other than my own during all of the hours of voting.

I therefore apply for an absentee ballot to be given to me by the town clerk as follows:

- ☐ In person at the town clerk's office.
- ☐ To be mailed to me at my voting residence identified above.
- ☐ To be mailed to me at the following mailing address:

where I will be receiving my mail and which is different from my voting residence.

I DECLARE, under penalties of false statement in absentee balloting, that the above statements are true and correct, that I am the applicant named above, and that I have completed and signed this application without the assistance of any person, except as otherwise identified on this form.

Signature of Absentee Ballot Applicant

Date

[a] PERSONS ARE GUILTY OF FALSE STATEMENT IN ABSENTEE BALLOTING when they intentionally make a false written statement on, or sign the name of another person to, the application for absentee voting forms. (Sec. 9-359a) [b] False Statement in absentee balloting is a class D felony. (Sec. 9-359a) [c] A SENTENCE for a class D felony shall be at least one year but may not exceed five years in prison. (Sec. 53a-35a) [d] A FINE for the conviction of a class D felony shall not exceed five thousand dollars. (Sec. 53a-41)

Signature of Assister I	Print Name, Title	Residence Address	Telephone Number
Signature of Assister II	Print Name, Title	Residence Address	Telephone Number

Either one or two people may assist the applicant in completing or signing this form at the request and in the presence of the applicant. All assisters must sign above. If an assister signs for the applicant because the applicant is unable to write, the assister must also follow the applicant's signature with the word "by" together with such assister's own initials.

Assisters may only be Registrars of Voters and their office staff, the Town Clerk and office staff, and a pair of absentee ballot coordinators appointed by the Registrars of Voters who may assist the applicant anywhere in the town. In addition to the above officials, designees of the applicant may assist at any location inside or outside the town. Such designees may only be members of the applicant's family or a licensed physician or registered or practical nurse caring for the applicant.

SOLICITUD PARA OTENER PAPELETA PARA VOTO EN AUSENCIA SOTS 700 Rev 8/8/03 Esta solicitud deberá ser devuelta al Secretario Municipal de West Haven; Town Hall; 355 Main St.; Box 526 West Haven, CT 06516-0526		Para el uso del Secretario Municipal Outer Envelope Serial Number: Date Absentee Ballot Issued:	
Esta Solicitud es Para: <input type="checkbox"/> Primaria del 9 de Sep. 2003 <input type="checkbox"/> Elección del 4 de Nov. 2003 (Marque Solamente Uno)		Si la Solicitud es para Primaria del 9 de Sep. del 2003: <input type="checkbox"/> Primaria del Partido Republicano <input type="checkbox"/> Primaria del Partido Demócrata (Marque Solamente Uno)	
Nombre del Solicitante (letra de imprenta)	Fecha de Nacimiento del Solicitante	Dirección Residencial de Votación (Número, calle y pueblo)	Absentee Ballot delivered: <input type="checkbox"/> Mailed <input type="checkbox"/> Hand-delivered (Check only one) Political Subdivision
			Voting District

DECLARACIÓN DEL SOLICITANTE DE PAPELETA POR ADELANTADO

Yo, el abajo firmante, creo ser elegible para votar en la elección o primaria indicada y declaro por la presente que no podré presentarme en el lugar de votación requerido durante las horas de votación de la indicada elección o primaria por la razón indicada abajo:

- ☐ Mi servicio activo en las fuerzas armadas.
- ☐ Mi ausencia de West Haven durante las horas de votación.
- ☐ Mi enfermedad.
- ☐ Mi incapacidad física.
- ☐ Mi credo religioso que me prohíbe actividades seculares el día de la elección.
- ☐ Mis deberes como oficial de elección o primaria en un lugar de votación distinto al que me corresponde votar durante todas las horas de votación.

Yo, por lo tanto, solicito que el formulario para votar en ausencia me sea entregado de la siguiente manera:

- ☐ Entregar personalmente en la oficina municipal de West Haven.
- ☐ Enviar por correo a mi residencia de votación identificada arriba.
- ☐ Enviar por correo a la siguiente dirección:

donde recibiré mi correspondencia y que es diferente a mi dirección residencial de votación.

Yo declaro, bajo pena de declaración falsa sobre papeleta para votar en ausencia, que las anteriores declaraciones son verdaderas y correctas. Que soy la persona mencionada arriba y que he completado y firmado esta solicitud sin la asistencia de ninguna persona, excepto por la persona indicada en este formulario.

Firma del Solicitante de Papeleta en Ausencia

Fecha

[a] LAS PERSONAS SON CULPABLES DE OFRECER DECLARACIONES FALSAS AL VOTAR EN AUSENCIA cuando intencionalmente hacen una declaración falsa por escrito, o firman el nombre de otra persona, en los formularios de solicitud para votar en ausencia. (Sec 9-359a) [b] Una declaración falsa en el caso de voto en ausencia es un delito grave clase D. (Sec. 9-359a) [c] LA SENTENCIA por un delito grave clase D no será menos de un año ni más de cinco años de encarcelamiento. (Sec. 53a-35a) [d] LA MULTA de este delito grave clase D no excederá cinco mil dólares (Sec. 53a-41)

Firma de Ayudante I	Imprima Nombre	Dirección Residencial	Número Telefónico
Firma de Ayudante II	Imprima Nombre	Dirección Residencial	Número Telefónico

Una o dos personas pueden ayudar al solicitante a completar o firmar este formulario al pedido, y en la presencia, del solicitante. Todos los ayudantes deben firmar arriba. Si el ayudante firma por el solicitante por que el solicitante no puede escribir, el ayudante debe también seguir la firma del solicitante con la palabra "por" junta con las propias iniciales del ayudante.

Asistentes solamente pueden ser el Registrador de Electores y sus delegados en las Oficinas de Inscripción de Votantes, el Secretario del Municipio o sus delegados en las oficinas del Secretario del Municipio, y un par de coordinadores de la Solicitud para Obtener Papeleta para Voto en Ausencia nombradas por el Registrador de Electores quien puede asistir al solicitante en cualquier parte de la ciudad. Además de los oficiales mencionados anteriormente, la persona escogida por el solicitante puede ayudarlo en cualquier localidad tanto afuera como adentro de la ciudad. Estos ayudantes escogidos deberán ser solamente miembros de la familia del solicitante, un medico licenciado o la enfermera titulada y encargada del cuidado del solicitante.

Application for Employment as Absentee Ballot Coordinator

- 1) Name: Last, First, Middle Initial _____
- 2) Residence Address: _____
- 3) Daytime Telephone # at which you may be called: _____
- 4) Evening Telephone #. _____
- 5) Do you have a Social Security number? Yes/No _____
- 6) Are you presently a municipal employee of this town? Yes/No _____
- 7) Are you presently a member or officer of any town committee? Yes/No _____
- 8) Are you employed by, or a volunteer for, a Political Party? Yes/No _____
- 9) Have you been employed by or a volunteer for a Political Party over the last three years? Yes/No _____
- 10) Have you been employed by or a volunteer for any political campaign committee or candidate over the last three years? Yes/No _____
- 11) Political Party Affiliation: _____
- 12) Name and Address of Employer (if none, write none) _____

- 13) Are you a member or employee of any collective bargaining union? Yes/No _____
- 14) If yes, name and address of union: _____

- 15) Do you read or write a language other than English? Yes/No _____
 - a) If yes, specify language: _____
- 16) Do you have a valid Connecticut driver's license? Yes/No _____
- 17) Are you a personal friend or relative of a candidate in this town this year? Yes/No _____
- 18) Are you a personal friend or relative of the Town Clerk or either Registrar of Voters? Yes/No _____
- 19) Can you be impartial? Yes/No _____
- 20) *Voluntary:* Race/Ethnic Data: check the box 1) ☐ black (not of Hispanic origin); 2) ☐ Hispanic (persons of Puerto Rican, Mexican, Central or South America or other Spanish Culture or origin, regardless of race); 3) ☐ White; 4) ☐ American Indian or Alaskan Native; 5) ☐ Asian or Pacific Islander. _____
- 21) Please provide two references?
 - a) _____
 - b) _____

Note: Answering yes to any of the personal friendship questions does not automatically disqualify you from being an Absentee Ballot Coordinator.

Applicant's Signature _____ Date _____

**REGISTRAR’S CERTIFICATE OF APPOINTMENT AND TRAINING
OF ABSENTEE BALLOT COORDINATOR(S) AND
ADMINISTRATION OF OATH OF OFFICE**

I, _____, Registrar of Voters, hereby certify that
I have appointed and trained the absentee ballot coordinator(s) listed below
and have sworn such officials to the faithful performance of their duties at
_____ a.m./p.m. on _____, 2003, in
_____, CT.

Name and Address of Absentee Ballot Coordinator(s):

- 1. _____

- 2. _____

- 3. _____

- 4. _____

- 5. _____

- 6. _____

- 7. _____

- 8. _____

- 9. _____

- 10. _____

Signature of Registrar of Voters

RECEIVED ON _____ (Date and Time)
TOWN CLERK _____

(TOWN LETTER HEAD)

(DATE)

This letter is to introduce (name of coordinator), who has been appointed by our office to serve as a Special Absent Ballot Coordinator for this (type in election). His/Her appointment will expire on (type in date). If you have any questions, we can be reached at (telephone #), or your option, you may call Police Officer (Name) at (telephone #).

Thank You!

Jane E. Smith
Republican Registrar of Voters

Joseph F. Anderson
Democratic Registrar of Voters

(Use Official embossed seal in this area, to make it more official)

cc Town Clerk
Republican A.B. Coordinators Name
Democratic A.B. Coordinators Name

BY LAW, TO VOTE BY ABSENTEE BALLOT,
YOU MUST BE UNABLE TO APPEAR AT YOUR
POLLING PLACE DURING ALL OF THE HOURS
OF VOTING (between 6:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m.) FOR
ONE OF THE FOLLOWING REASONS:

- 1) Your active service in the armed forces;
- 2) Your absence from town during all of the hours
of voting (between 6:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m.);
- 3) Your illness;
- 4) Your physical disability;
- 5) Your religious beliefs forbid secular activity
during all of the hours of voting; or
- 6) You will be a primary or election official at a
polling place other than your own during all of
the hours of voting.

If you do not meet one the conditions specified above, do not return the
attached absentee ballot application, but go to your polling place on Election
Day between the hours of 6:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m.

Note: any elector who has completed and returned an absentee ballot to the
town clerk and who finds he or she is able to vote in person is required by
state law to withdraw their absentee ballot in the town clerk's office before
10:00 AM on Election or Primary day and proceed to vote in person.

To find out where your polling place is located, call your Registrar of Voters
at _____.

Notice of Penalties for false statement in an application for absentee ballot:
Conviction for intentional false statement on this form is a Class D felony
punishable up to five years in prison and/or a fine not to exceed (\$5,000)
five thousand dollars.

#	Date of Application Request	Applicant's Last Name	Applicant's First Name	Street #	Street (Voting) Address	Applicant's Phone Number	Mailing Address (if different)	Requester's Name (if different than applicant)	Candidate, Party Official or their Agent Y/N	Mailed Date	Hand Delivery Date	Name of Designee Appl. Given to	Assist. Given? Y/N	Date Filed with Clerk
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4														
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Signature of Official _____ Date _____

Instructions for ABC Log

#: Line Number Symbol. Each line# represents a separate request for a blank application for absentee ballot.

Date of Application Request: Enter the date that a blank application for absentee ballot was requested by or on behalf of a potential voter.

Applicant's Last Name: Enter the last name of the voter making a request for a blank application for absentee ballot.

Applicant's First Name: Enter the first name of the voter making a request for a blank application for absentee ballot.

Street #: Enter the street number of the voter's voting address.

Street (Voting) Address: Enter the street name of the voter's voting address.

Applicant's Phone Number: Enter the voter's telephone number, if known.

Mailing Address (if different): Enter the voter's mailing address if different from the voter's voting address.

Requester's Name: Enter the name of the person requesting a blank application for absentee ballot on behalf of a potential voter, if other than a voter requesting the blank application for himself/herself.

Candidate, Party Official or their Agent Y/N: Enter Yes (Y) or No (N) if the person requesting a blank application for absentee ballot on behalf of a potential voter is a candidate or party official, or the agent of a candidate or party official.

Mailed Date: Enter the date that the blank application for absentee ballot is mailed to a potential voter, if the application is mailed.

Hand Delivery Date: Enter the date that the blank application for absentee ballot is hand-delivered to a potential voter, if the application is hand-delivered.

Name of Designee Appl. Given to: If the application for absentee ballot is requested by, or delivered to, a designee of the potential voter, enter the name of such designee. The following categories of persons may be designees: (1) a person who is caring for the voter because of the voter's illness or physical disability—i.e. a registered or practical nurse; 2) a dependant relative residing in the voter's household or the voter's spouse, child or parent; 3) a police officer, registrars of voters or their deputies from the voter's town.

Assist. Given? Y/N: Enter Yes (Y) or No (N) if either the Registrar or member of the Registrar's staff, the Town Clerk or member of the Town Clerk's staff, or the two Absentee Ballot Coordinators acting as a pair, assisted the voter in completing or signing the application for absentee ballot.

Date Filed with Clerk: Registrars or their staff and absentee ballot coordinators acting as a pair should enter this date only if they file the completed absentee ballot application with the Town Clerk. Otherwise, the Town Clerk enters this date when the potential voter's mailed and completed application for absentee ballot is received by the Town Clerk's office.

AB PILOT PROJECT DUTIES OF ABSENTEE BALLOT COORDINATORS (ABCs)

PROCESSES

Form Stamping: *Application for Absentee Ballot* (Form ABC-1) must be embossed with official stamp.

Assisting: Assisting requires the co-signature of both Absentee Ballot Coordinators (ABCs) working as a pair.

Log Maintenance: For each request for an AB application form, whether in writing, in-person or over the phone, the ABCs must complete the entry on the *Log of Absentee Ballot Application Requesters* (Form ABC-4).

Verification of Need: If the request to provide an application originates with a candidate or campaign agent, both ABCs, within 2 business days of the referral, must attempt a phone call to the potential absentee ballot applicant or personal designee or make a site visit to the in-town address of the applicant to ascertain whether the application is needed. During such contact, the ABCs will explain the qualifying reasons for voting absentee but shall not question the applicant's basis for eligibility. It is the applicant's decision to sign the application under penalty of false statement. If the referral of a potential applicant includes a request for assistance, the ABCs shall render assistance as soon as practicable with due consideration for the applicant's availability and the timing of the election.

PROCEDURE

1. For requests, from any source, to deliver an AB application out-of-town, the request must be referred by both ABCs to the Town Clerk's office or Registrars of Voters' office for mailing.
2. For requests from the Town Clerk or Registrars of Voters for in-town delivery the ABCs must first verify the request and then provide as follows:
 - i. If *assistance is requested* ABCs should offer to render assistance and if assistance is rendered both ABCs must cosign form, return it to Town Clerk and complete log maintenance.
 - ii. If at time of delivery *assistance is declined*, both ABCs may leave AB application for potential applicant and complete log maintenance.
3. For requests from all other persons, refer them to the Town Clerk or Registrar of Voters.

AB PILOT PROJECT DUTIES OF TOWN CLERK

PROCESSES

Form Stamping: *Application for Absentee Ballot* (Form ABC-1) must be embossed with official stamp.

Assisting: Assisting requires the co-signature of the assister, who may be the Town Clerk or a member of the Town Clerk's staff.

Log Maintenance: For each request for an AB application form in which assistance is requested, whether in writing, in person or over the phone, the Town Clerk or a member of the Town Clerk's staff must complete the entry on the *Log of Absentee Ballot Application Requesters* (Form ABC-4).

PROCEDURE

1. For requests, from any source, to deliver an AB application out-of-town, the AB Application must be mailed to a potential applicant or designee of a potential applicant from the Town Clerk's office.
2. For requests for in-town delivery:
 - a. If source is from AB applicant or their personal Designee, provide as follows:
 - i. If made in person at Town Clerk's office and *assistance is* requested, the Town Clerk or member of the Town Clerk's staff should render assistance and cosign form;
 - ii. If request made in person at Town Clerk's office and *no assistance* requested, Town Clerk should hand over form without cosigning;
 - iii. If request made by telephone or in writing, fax, etc. and *assistance* requested, Town Clerk may *not* mail or deliver but must give to ABC's for joint delivery and assistance;
 - iv. If request made by telephone or in writing, fax, etc. and *no assistance* requested, Town Clerk or member of the Town Clerk's staff may mail form application.
 - b. If source is from party, candidate, out-of-town election officials, Secretary of the State, or their agents, on behalf of a potential AB applicant, Town Clerk must give to ABC's for verification that an application is needed. The ABCs would jointly deliver the application and provide assistance, if requested.
 - c. If source is in-town Registrar of Voters, the Town Clerk or member of the Town Clerk's staff must determine the original requester source and follow the above.
3. Town Clerk or member of the Town Clerk's staff should ask the source of the request, "Do you or does the applicant need assistance?"

AB PILOT PROJECT DUTIES OF REGISTRARS OF VOTERS

PROCESSES

Form Stamping: *Application for Absentee Ballot* (Form ABC-1) must be embossed with official stamp.

Assisting: Assisting requires the co-signature of the assister, who may be either Registrar of Voters or members of their staff.

Log Maintenance: For each request for an AB application form in which assistance is requested, whether in writing, in-person or over the phone, the Registrar or their staff Registrar must complete the entry on the *Log of Absentee Ballot Application Requesters* (Form ABC-4).

PROCEDURE

1. For requests, from any source, to deliver an AB application out-of-town, the AB Application must be mailed to a potential applicant or designee of a potential applicant from Registrars' office.
2. For requests for in-town delivery:
 - a. If source is from AB applicant or their personal Designee, provide as follows:
 - i. If made in person at Registrars' office and *assistance* is requested either Registrar or their staff should render assistance and cosign form;
 - ii. If request made in person at Registrars' office and *no assistance* requested, either Registrar or their staff should hand over form without cosigning;
 - iii. If request made by telephone or in writing, fax, etc. and *assistance* requested, Registrars may *not* mail or deliver but must give to ABC's for joint delivery and assistance;
 - iv. If request made by telephone or in writing, fax, etc. and *no assistance* requested Registrars or their staff may mail form application.
 - b. By agreement with the Town Clerk, the Registrars may refer all such requests for applications to the Town Clerk.
 - c. If source is from party, candidate, out-of-town election officials, Secretary of the State, or their agents, on behalf of a potential AB applicant, must give to ABC's for follow up and verification that an application was requested. The ABCs would jointly deliver the application and provide assistance, if requested.
3. Registrars or their staff should ask the source of the request, "Do you or does the applicant need assistance?"

**DO'S AND DON'TS FOR CANDIDATES, CAMPAIGN AND PARTY
WORKERS IN THE ABSENTEE BALLOT PILOT PROGRAM
ESTABLISHED BY PUBLIC ACT 2003-227**

(Applicable to the Towns of Kent and Winsted and the City of
West Haven for the November 4, 2003 municipal election)

DO

- Continue to campaign door-to-door or by telephone and ask voters whether they need an absentee ballot
- Ask voters whether they need assistance in completing an absentee ballot application
- Take their name, address and phone number to provide to the Town Clerk
- Provide the name and telephone number of the Town Clerk to any voter who needs an absentee ballot application

DON'T

- Distribute absentee ballot applications in person or by mail
- Attempt to find out who has requested or been mailed a ballot until three business days prior to the election
- Contact the absentee ballot coordinator's directly (contact Town Clerk)
- Misrepresent the reasons for voting by absentee ballot or solicit a false statement (this is existing law)
- Be present when a voter executes his or her ballot (this is existing law)*
- Take possession of an absentee ballot (this is existing law)*

*There is a limited exception when the voter is a member of the immediate family of a candidate, campaign or party worker or when the ballot is completed in the office of the municipal clerk and the municipal clerk is a candidate



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
STATE ELECTIONS ENFORCEMENT COMMISSION
20 Trinity Street - Suite 101 • Hartford, Connecticut 06106 - 1628

To: Deborah Collins, Town Clerk of West Haven
Mary Marino, Democratic Registrar of Voters
Jo Ann Callegari, Republican Registrar of Voters

From: Jeffrey B. Garfield, Executive Director and General Counsel

Re: Absentee Ballot Reform Pilot Program—Public Act 03-227

Date: September 30, 2003

This is to advise you that the State Elections Enforcement Commission met in a special meeting this morning to officially designate West Haven as the big city participant in the AB Reform Pilot program established by Public Act 03-227. We are enthused about the City's participation in this experiment in democracy, and express our gratitude for all your support for the program. As you know, we have already furnished 500 Absentee Ballot applications to the Town Clerk that are unique to West Haven, and will be utilized for the upcoming general election, along with the logs of application requests to be kept by each of you. I trust that the Registrars have already made significant efforts to recruit the Absentee Ballot Coordinators (ABCs) that will assist in the implementation of the program. Mary and Jo Ann, we appreciate your efforts in this regard. I have also sent a letter to each candidate appearing on the general election ballot in the City that briefly explains the program, and a one page summary of the Do's and Don'ts for Candidates, Campaign and Party Workers, under the pilot. I enclose a copy of the letter sent to the Republican candidate for Mayor as an example, as well as the one-page summary. If necessary, we will schedule a meeting with the candidates to answer questions that they may have about the program.

Further, two meetings have been scheduled as follows:

- (1) October 2 at 9 A.M. in the Town Clerk's Office for Town Clerk, ROVs and any staff of these offices you deem appropriate to go over details of the program, publicity, scheduling of ABC visits to multi-family dwellings in the City, and related matters.
- (2) October 7 at 2 P.M. in the Town Clerk's Office to train the ABCs. ROVs should provide as much advance notice to ABCs as possible of this mandatory training meeting. Please let me know ASAP if this date/time does not work for you. Jan Murtha, Republican Registrar of South Windsor, knows a reliable and very inexpensive vendor of embossed stamps to order for your ABCs to stamp applications they distribute. Her number is 860-644-2511.

I look forward to seeing you on Thursday, and to working closely with you to ensure the success of the program.



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Training of Absentee Ballot Coordinators
City of West Haven
October 7, 2003

I. Introductions

II. Background of Public Act 03-227

- A. Requested by SEEC
- B. Why
- C. Broad Bi-Partisan Support of General Assembly
- D. Participating Towns
- E. West Haven City Council approves participation in Pilot on September 22, 2003

III. Absentee Voting

- A. Connecticut is unique in that the eligibility requirements for voting Absentee Ballot are specified in the State Constitution
- B. Specify Eligibility Requirements (6)
 - 1. Three main reasons = illness, disability, absence from town during hours of voting
 - 2. To obtain absentee ballot, a voter must complete application
 - 3. Applicant checks off box corresponding with reason for voting absentee ballot, and signs under penalty of false statement, that he/she is who he/she says they are, and that the reason checked off is true.
 - 4. Any one assisting an applicant in completion of application must sign
- C. Current Law-Absentee Ballot Process
 - 1. Applications then delivered to Town Clerk by anyone
 - 2. Town Clerk has 24 hours upon receipt to mail an absentee ballot to the applicant, application/list of applicant are public record under FOI, anyone can see it.
 - 3. Application is mailed, blank ballot set, including inner and outer envelopes, ballot and instructions.
 - 4. Ballot is inserted in inner envelope, which requires voter to sign under penalty of false statement that he is eligible to vote absentee ballot.
 - 5. Inner envelope, containing completed absentee ballot, is sealed and placed in outer envelope and mailed to Town Clerk.

D. Current Prohibitions

6. Possession/mailling restricted to
 - a. voter himself or
 - b. voter's designee if voter is ill or disabled
i.e. designee is person caring for voter such as MD or RN, voter's family member
 - c. member of immediate family of a voter who is student away at college
§9-140b(a)
7. Presence while completion of ballot
 - a. Candidate, campaign or party worker can't be present while voter completes his/her ballot.
8. Can't attempt to ascertain how a voter marked ballot
9. Can't open or complete another's ballot
10. Can't sign an application or inner envelope for another

IV. Changes to Currant Law Made by Public Act 03-227

(Absentee Ballot application process only)

- A. Distribution of Absentee Ballot applications restricted to Town Clerk, Registrar of Voters and Absentee Ballot Coordinators.
 1. Candidates, campaign and party workers are prohibited from possessing and distributing applications.
- B. Confidentiality of Applications/List of applicants until Friday before November 4th election.

V. `Absentee Ballot Application Process Under Pilot

- A. Unique absentee ballot applications
 1. Easier to read/understand
 2. Spanish translation on reverse
 3. Accountability
- B. Distribution of Absentee Ballot Applications
 1. No one who is eligible to vote by absentee ballot shall be denied that opportunity
 2. By agreement, Registrars of Voters in West Haven will not distribute absentee ballot application, but will refer telephone and in person requests to Town Clerk.
 3. Vast majority of absentee ballot applications will be dispensed directly by Town Clerk to applicant or family member of applicant in person or by mail
 4. Town Clerk to use embossed stamp for each application provided to an applicant, and enter information on Log of Applications. Town Clerk or her staff will ask telephone requester whether the applicant requires assistance in completion of the absentee ballot application, and if so, will assign two ABCs to render assistance jointly.

5. ABCs distribution will always be done jointly. The ABCs distribution will primarily consist of the in person sessions at three multi-family (senior) housing complexes in City are secondarily to others who request assistance in the completion of the application.

C. Absentee Ballot Coordinator's Project Duties (review sheet)

1. Stamp forms with official ABC stamp when actually dispensing applications
 2. Assisting; if ABC completes any data element on application form, or is physically present and explains completion to absentee ballot applicant, both ABCs must jointly sign the application.
 3. Log: for each application dispensed, the ABCs must complete the entry on the log of absentee ballot application requesters (Form ABC-4)
Review instruction data entries on log.
 4. Verification of Need for an Application:
Review carefully-from sheet
Phone call attempt to verify
 - a) If no answer, leave message to call or make and attempt
 - b) When verifying, explain that person's name was provided as some one who may need to vote by absentee ballot. Identify the three main reasons for qualifying to vote by absentee ballot. Ask "Do you qualify"? "Shall I send you an application"? Confirm mailing address. "Do you need assistance in completing the application"? "Is there a family member who can assist you or do you need to have me and another ABC come to your house to assist you"?
5. On Site Assistance at Senior Housing Complex
- a) Each team of ABCs to conduct one session
 - b) Arrange date, time and location within building for session through tenant association or building management liaison-work through Registrars of Voters.
 - c) Publicity-posters in building
Identifying past users-work with Town Clerk
Issue notice/mailboxes
 - d) At session, no candidates, campaign or party workers-suggest scheduling during the week of October 20th
Registrars of Voters present (?)-introduce
 - Review eligibility requirements for absentee ballot
 - Ask if anyone present does not meet eligibility requirement-need ride to polls-take note and provide to Registrar of Voters
 - Distribute applications-explain data elements
 - Explain penalty of false statement
 - Return completed applications to Town Clerk
 - Inquire as to persons needing assistance in absentee ballot completion and arrange return visit



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PRESS RELEASE

Attention: West Haven Voters who need to Vote by Absentee Ballot

The West Haven City Council has approved participation in a pilot program that makes various changes to absentee voting procedures for the upcoming municipal election on November 4, 2003. West Haven is one of three municipalities that will participate in the program, according to Jeffrey Garfield, Executive Director and General Counsel of the State Elections Enforcement Commission. The Commission is charged with administering the pilot program that was created by the General Assembly, and has been working with the West Haven City Clerk and Registrars of Voters Offices to implement the new procedures for this municipal election.

The purpose of the program is to protect against absentee ballot abuses. Mr. Garfield indicated that "absentee voting abuses are the number one problem in our electoral process today." The pilot program introduces new procedures intended to ensure that absentee voters are not harassed or intimidated, and that they enjoy the same right to privacy that other voters who vote at the polling place enjoy when they close the curtain to their voting booth. Candidates, campaign and political party workers cannot distribute absentee ballot applications under the pilot program. The list of persons applying for and receiving absentee ballot will be confidential under this program to better protect against intimidation and harassment.

An application for an absentee ballot may be obtained directly by any person who needs one by contacting the City Clerk's office at 937-3534. Persons with physical disabilities and others who need assistance in completing an application or an absentee ballot may also contact the City Clerk's office, and 2 impartial absentee ballot coordinators of different political parties will render assistance jointly to the absentee voter.

To qualify for an absentee ballot for the upcoming municipal election, you must be a registered voter who is either (1) ill or (2) physically disabled and cannot get to the polling place, or intends to be (3) absent from West Haven during all hours of voting on Election Day (November 4, 2003). Other legitimate reasons for voting absentee include service in the military, religious observance forbidding secular activity on Election Day, and service as a poll worker in a polling place other than your own. Any person who needs an absentee ballot must attest to the reason for voting absentee on the application under penalty of false statement. False statement is a felony, and so only voters who qualify should apply for an absentee ballot.

Mr. Garfield said, "no one who legitimately needs an absentee ballot will be denied one." The right to vote is protected by the State Constitution. We hope that the people of West Haven will find the new procedures to be fairer, and more protective of their right to cast a secret ballot.

For more information and to request an absentee ballot, please call the City Clerk's Office at 937-3534.



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STATE ELECTIONS ENFORCEMENT COMMISSION
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PRESS RELEASE

Attention: Kent Voters who need to Vote by Absentee Ballot

The Kent Board of Selectmen has approved participation in a pilot program that makes various changes to absentee voting procedures for the upcoming municipal election on November 4, 2003. Kent is one of three municipalities that will participate in the program, according to Jeffrey Garfield, Executive Director and General Counsel of the State Elections Enforcement Commission. The Commission is charged with administering the pilot program that was created by the General Assembly, and has been working with the Kent Town Clerk and Registrars of Voters Offices to implement the new procedures for this municipal election.

The purpose of the program is to protect against absentee ballot abuses. Mr. Garfield indicated that "absentee voting abuses are the number one problem in our electoral process today." The pilot program introduces new procedures intended to ensure that absentee voters are not harassed or intimidated, and that they enjoy the same right to privacy that other voters who vote at the polling place enjoy when they close the curtain to their voting booth. Candidates, campaign and political party workers cannot distribute absentee ballot applications under the pilot program. The list of persons applying for and receiving absentee ballot will be confidential under this program to better protect against intimidation and harassment.

An application for an absentee ballot may be obtained directly by any person who needs one by contacting the Town Clerk's office at 927-3433. Persons with physical disabilities and others who need assistance in completing an application or an absentee ballot may also contact the Town Clerk's office, and 2 impartial absentee ballot coordinators of different political parties will render assistance jointly to the absentee voter.

To qualify for an absentee ballot for the upcoming municipal election, you must be a registered voter who is either (1) ill or (2) physically disabled and cannot get to the polling place, or intends to be (3) absent from Kent during all hours of voting on Election Day (November 4, 2003). Other legitimate reasons for voting absentee include service in the military, religious observance forbidding secular activity on Election Day, and service as a poll worker in a polling place other than your own. Any person who needs an absentee ballot must attest to the reason for voting absentee on the application under penalty of false statement. False statement is a felony, and so only voters who qualify should apply for an absentee ballot.

Mr. Garfield said, "no one who legitimately needs an absentee ballot will be denied one." The right to vote is protected by the State Constitution. We hope that the people of Kent will find the new procedures to be fairer, and more protective of their right to cast a secret ballot.

For more information and to request an absentee ballot, please call the Town Clerk's Office at 927-3433.

(30)



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
STATE ELECTIONS ENFORCEMENT COMMISSION
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PRESS RELEASE

Attention: Winsted and Kent Voters who need to Vote by Absentee Ballot

The Board of Selectman in the towns of Winsted and in Kent have approved participation in a pilot program that makes various changes to absentee voting procedures for the upcoming municipal election on November 4, 2003. Winsted and Kent are two of three municipalities that will participate in the program, according to Jeffrey Garfield, Executive Director and General Counsel of the State Elections Enforcement Commission. The Commission is charged with administering the pilot program that was created by the General Assembly, and has been working with the Town Clerk and Registrars of Voters Offices in Winsted and Kent to implement the new procedures for this municipal election.

The purpose of the program is to protect against absentee ballot abuses. Mr. Garfield indicated that "absentee voting abuses are the number one problem in our electoral process today." The pilot program introduces new procedures intended to ensure that absentee voters are not harassed or intimidated, and that they enjoy the same right to privacy that other voters who vote at the polling place enjoy when they close the curtain to their voting booth. Candidates, campaign and political party workers cannot distribute absentee ballot applications under the pilot program. The list of persons applying for and receiving absentee ballot will be confidential under this program to better protect against intimidation and harassment.

An application for an absentee ballot may be obtained directly by any person who needs one by contacting the Town Clerk's office; in Winsted, the number is 738-6963, and in Kent, the number is 927-3433. Persons with physical disabilities and others who need assistance in completing an application or an absentee ballot may also contact the Town Clerk's office, and 2 impartial absentee ballot coordinators of different political parties will render assistance jointly to the absentee voter.

To qualify for an absentee ballot for the upcoming municipal election, you must be a registered voter who is either (1) ill or (2) physically disabled and cannot get to the polling place, or intends to be (3) absent from your town of residence during all hours of voting on Election Day (November 4, 2003). Other legitimate reasons for voting absentee include service in the military, religious observance forbidding secular activity on Election Day, and service as a poll worker in a polling place other than your own. Any person who needs an absentee ballot must attest to the reason for voting absentee on the application under penalty of false statement. False statement is a felony, and so only voters who qualify should apply for an absentee ballot.

Mr. Garfield said, "no one who legitimately needs an absentee ballot will be denied one." The right to vote is protected by the State Constitution. We hope that the people of Winsted and Kent will find the new procedures to be fairer, and more protective of their right to cast a secret ballot.

For more information and to request an absentee ballot, please call the Winsted Town Clerk's Office at 738-6963 or the Kent Town Clerk's Office at 927-3433.



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
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Absentee Voting Reform Pilot Project
EVALUATION
For: Town Clerks and Registrars of Voters
Public Act 2003-227

1. In what capacity did you participate in the 2003 Absentee Voting Reform Pilot Project? (Check one)

Town Clerk 4
Registrar of Voters 5

2. Do you feel that the absentee voting pilot procedures were an improvement over the regular absentee ballot application procedures used in prior elections or primaries?

ROV Yes 3
Comments: Excellent, cut down on duplication of applications sent out. Hopefully gave voter chance to determine if he really wanted to vote, it can be difficult to say no to someone standing at your door.

ROV No 1 Kent said their role was minimal.

TC Yes 3
Comments: ABC help with senior complex, kept seniors happy, less intimidated. They didn't have 80 applications at one time from one interest group. One Town Clerk was new and couldn't compare.

3. Do you feel that the absentee voting pilot procedures favorably or unfavorably affected the integrity of the absentee ballot process?

ROVs Favorably with one saying not at all
Comments: Eliminated intimidation and fraud, choices without pressure, ABCs there for assistance, removed pressure and duplication

TC 4 Favorably
Comments: Voter had to make his contact or if the campaign handed in list they were checked. Feels voters who truly needed ballot received them

4. In your opinion, was the revised absentee ballot application form used in the pilot an improvement over the absentee ballot application form used in your town in prior elections or primaries?

ROV Yes 5

Comments: Clarification improved, clearer for voter, form easier to understand, user friendly, easier to read, although basically the same, the new format made it more clear understandable

TC Yes 4

Comments: Larger print, bold print for penalties and assister telephone number, clearer, larger font, defines use of. One Town Clerk felt they were about the same.

5. One of the components of the pilot program was that the list of absentee ballot applicants as well as the executed applications themselves were kept confidential until three days before the election. Do you favor this confidentiality component over the current law that provides that the list of absentee ballot applicants and the applications are public records and open to inspection by anyone?

ROV 4 Favor confidentiality

Comments: Helped eliminate intimidation especially for senior voters. One ROV said that she understands the rationale for this, in free society this is a tough question. Will say yea and not. Might this not leave the entire program open to challenge.

ROV 1 No

TC Yes 4

Comments: Although feels every voter has right to vote absentee, if they qualify and return ballot when they choose. Names will become public when the check off list at the polls, don't think anyone should be monitored.

6. Another component of the pilot program was to restrict distribution of absentee ballot applications to the town clerk, registrar of voters and a neutral corps of absentee ballot coordinators appointed by each registrar. Do you favor this approach over the procedures used in prior elections or primaries, which permit candidates, political parties and their agents to distribute blank absentee ballot applications and assist voters in the completion of absentee ballot applications?

ROVs Yes 3

Comments: Definitely favor this procedure, contained and controlled. ABCs have commented those voters are pleased with not having to deal with some pushy candidates. Yes, don't feel anyone should be pressured by group to vote.

TC Yes 4

Comments: When candidates and parties went door to door, there was pressure. It removes pressure on voter and removes chance of manipulation.

7. Do you think that the absentee ballot pilot project generally served the voter well?

ROV Yes 3

Comments: Overall, ABC worked well together, voters were pleased, as always some did not understand. In the beginning some complaints from special interest groups. Have yet to hear from any voter that they were denied their rights.

TC Yes 4

8. Did you encounter any difficulties with voters in ascertaining whether they in fact needed an absentee ballot application and/or assistance in completing an absentee ballot application?

ROV No 2

Comments: No difficulty whatsoever. Only comment from ABCs was that they found it difficult at time to be together to make phone calls to voters.

ROV Yes 1

Comments: Said just a couple. The democratic deputy brought in two applications where the ABC's could not reach the person. It was mailed.

TC Yes 1

TC No 2

9. Did you experience any occasion or instance of a potential absentee ballot applicant complaining about or being unhappy with the procedures for obtaining an absentee ballot application under the pilot?

TC No 2

TC Yes 2

Comments: A student who filled out the old application, it was resolved. One person said she didn't get the newspaper and was dependent on parties to call, she suggested that it would be good idea to have a list of people that they could call to update through out the year.

ROV No 2

Comments: No complaint, voters were understanding and cooperative with procedure

ROV Yes 1

Comments: Only through the remarks heard from ABC from voters who were not aware of program

10. Did you experience any occasion or instance of a potential absentee ballot applicant being pleased with the new procedures for obtaining an absentee ballot application under the pilot?

ROV Yes 2

Comments: Eliminated harassment by politicians, heard through ABCs

ROV No 1

TC Yes 2

Comments: Most absentee voters who had the opportunity to meet the ABC said that they felt less pressure. Several people expressed pleasure with the system.

TC No 2

11. Do you think that there was sufficient publicity concerning the absentee voting pilot program in your town?

ROV West Haven said that there could have been much more specific news coverage, The New Haven Register was late in printing. Two small town papers did published notices. Kent was the only one that said the coverage was good.

TC West Haven said more time for educating the public was needed and more exposure in the news. Kent and Winsted felt the publicity was good and most people were informed

12. Do you favor removing the ability of candidates, campaign and party workers to distribute applications?

ROV Yes 2

Comments: Keeping distribution of applicants to the City Clerk and ABC made for fewer duplications.

ROV No 1

TC Yes 4

Comments: Candidates should stay away, they pressure the voter.

13. Do you favor limiting the distribution of absentee ballot application forms to election officials such as the Town Clerk, Registrar of Voters or Absentee Ballot Application Coordinators?

ROV Yes 4

Comments: Keeps AB returns in proportion to number sent out and better control

TC Yes 3

Comments: Applications can only be given by the above officials. The Winsted Town Clerk said that previously applications were handed out to many those who did not request them. She feels the voter has a right to need a ballot, request one, vote and return it.

14. Do you favor limiting the class of individuals who may assist a voter in the completion of an absentee ballot application form to election officials such as the Town Clerk, Registrar of Voters or Absentee Ballot Coordinators and personal designees of the applicant who are members of the applicant's family or health care providers?

ROV Yes 4

Comments: Reduces duplication, reduces fraud. Voters can make sound choices if not watched over by candidate and campaign workers

TC Yes 4

Comments: Keeps candidates and political parties away from voters. Only the ABC coordinator and certain elected officials can give out application. Some felt that the Town Clerk and Registrars should not if they are on the ballot.

15. Do you have other suggestions for how to improve the absentee voting process?

Telephoning applicants could be streamlined
More publication of program and an earlier start

16. Under the pilot program, a person is eligible to serve as an absentee ballot coordinator unless he/she is a member of a town committee, a town employee, or is working for a candidate or political party in the election. Do you favor or oppose such restrictions on the eligibility to serve as an absentee ballot coordinator?

ROV Favor All 4

Comments: Excellent restrictions, if state adopt this program let's keep it as neutral as possible

ROV Favor some 1

Comments: Thinks Town committee members would be ok

TC Favor all 1

Comments: It lessens the chance of abuse

TC Favor Some 2

17. (To be answered by Town Clerks) Please provide the following statistical information concerning the use of absentee ballots in your town:

Number of requests for applications	833 total
Number of applications returned	797
Number of ballots sent out	792
Number of ballots returned	620
Number of ballots counted	608
Number of ballots rejected	0

18. (To be answered by Town Clerks) Please provide the number of ballots sent out and returned in the *last* municipal election (2001)

Number of ballots sent out	1000
Number of ballots returned	868

19. Please identify the number of voters requesting an absentee ballot because of:

Illness	128
Physical Disability	302
Out of town	259
Religious	0
Military	7
Poll worker	20
Other	1

20. Did the Absentee Voting Pilot Program affect or reduce the number of multiple applications from the same voter?

TC Yes 2

Comments: Many times they would get the same voter with 2 applications. Seniors would forget or fill out 4 or 5. Kent had not multiple applications.

TC Reduce the canvassing by candidates plus phone calls made at headquarters increase duplicate application.

21. How many voters required assistance in the completion of their absentee ballot *applications*?

West Haven said about 20, Kent said 6 and Winsted said none.

22. How many voters required assistance in the completion of their absentee *ballots*?

Winsted none, Kent Town Clerk said about 6, West Haven said 20

23. Were there any instances where a voter's name was provided to the town clerk as in need of an absentee ballot application, but the town clerk, registrar of voters or absentee ballot coordinator subsequently learned that the voter denied making such a request?

All said no

24. (To be answered by Registrars of Voters) Did you have any difficulty finding qualified people to serve as absentee ballot coordinators?

No 3

Yes 1

Comment: West Haven said that because of the short amount of time given before start of pilot, it was difficult to find people who were qualified and willing to take on this responsibility

25. (To be answered by Registrars of Voters) What, if anything, did you pay your absentee ballot coordinators? _____ If yes, from what source of funds?

West Haven=\$250 per ABC from city funds

Kent= \$10.60 per hour from town funds

Winsted= \$10. per hour from regular elections account

26. (To be answered by Registrars of Voters) What were your total expenditures for absentee ballot coordinators? If you paid them hourly, please indicate their hourly wage _____

West Haven= They were paid \$250 each, 6 ABCs, 3 Rep. 3 Dem.

Winsted= \$10 per hour

27. (To be answered by Registrars of Voters) How much did your absentee ballot coordinators work? Please quantify in terms of days or hours worked and number of site visits.

West Haven= No more than 10 or 12 per ABC

Kent= 3.5 hrs

Winsted=not seen bills yet

28. Should absentee ballot coordinators be paid? Yes/No
If yes, from what source?

All the Town Clerks and Registrars of Voters agreed that the ABC should be paid and from town or city funds. They said that time patience and effort was put into the program.

29. Would you support or oppose the extension of the absentee voting pilot project as a statewide mandate? Yes/No (Circle one)

ROV Yes 2

Comments: Mr. Garfield did an excellent job of planning and guidance to make the program successful. The program hopefully will be adopted by the state legislature. The program has merit

ROV one said that they will reserve final judgment.

TC All the Town Clerks felt that it was a fair process. It will keep voter fraud out of the absentee ballot voting and cut down on soliciting of AB ballots.

30. If you have any other opinions or suggestions concerning your experience with the absentee voting pilot project please express your opinion here:

West Haven said that the process might be difficult in a primary, especially a three way. It may need to be redesigned. Jeff Garfield did an excellent job in planning and guidance. Perhaps telephoning can be done by one or the other ABC not both together. Scheduling was a problem.

West Haven didn't receive one call from a voter about being harassed.

Winsted received a few complaints from candidates but that was expected. One was that there was not representation for the unaffiliated voter however they did have one ABC who was unaffiliated. Perhaps this should be mandated if the program is adopted.

Winsted Town Clerk suggested color-coded boxes to be filled in by the applicant. Several applications came back where they didn't put their name and address on them.



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STATE ELECTIONS ENFORCEMENT COMMISSION
20 Trinity Street - Suite 101 • Hartford, Connecticut 06106 - 1628

Absentee Voting Reform Pilot Project
EVALUATION
For: Absentee Ballot Coordinators
Public Act 2003-227

1. Do you feel that the absentee voting pilot procedures were an improvement over the regular absentee ballot application procedures used in prior elections or primaries?

Yes 14

Comments: Less fraud, quality communications between ABC and prospective voters was much improved and professional, restricting number of groups in contact with voters give better control and accountability. Voters given choice if they want application or not, no pressure by candidates, removes suspicion of coercions, helps prevent mistakes, limits application to those who need them and fair distributions.

No 1

Comments: Small town, made no difference

2. Do you feel that the absentee voting pilot procedures favorably or unfavorably affected the integrity of the absentee ballot process?

Favorable 14

Comments: More choice, pilot favorable affected integrity of process, enthusiasm for program, straight line toward responsibility, no influence by candidate or party workers. All parties represented, start to finish, well managed, phone calls confirmed need for application, two parties insure integrity.

3. In your opinion, was the revised absentee ballot application form used in the pilot an improvement over the absentee ballot application form used in your town in prior elections or primaries? Yes/No (Circle one)

Yes 5

Comments: Definite improvement, excellent cooperation between voters and ABC. Easier to read

No one said same as before

4. One of the components of the pilot program was that the list of absentee ballot applicants as well as the executed applications themselves were kept confidential until three days before the election. Do you favor this confidentiality component over the current law that provides that the list of absentee ballot applicants and the applications are public records and open to inspection by anyone?

Yes 13

Comments: Always be personal and private, definitely favor confidentiality, professional. Voters felt better about not being troubled by so many people. Fewer days would eliminate influence by candidates and party workers. Prevents improper use of information, confidentiality important

No 1

Comments: Favor public record for cross check after elections, right to know.

5. Another component of the pilot program was to restrict distribution of absentee ballot applications to the town clerk, registrar of voters and a neutral corps of absentee ballot coordinators appointed by each registrar. Do you favor this approach over the procedures used in prior elections or primaries, which permit candidates, political parties and their agents to distribute blank absentee ballot applications and assist voters in the completion of absentee ballot applications? Yes/No (Circle one)

Yes 13

Comments: Way pilot was done, less fraud, reduces corruption and coercion. Voters like their privacy, restricts influence of candidate and party workers. Better control over those with questionable ethics. No pressure or undue influence, prevent inappropriate abuse. Puts responsibility on ABCs, protects voters.

No 1

Comment: Doesn't think candidates or party influence should have any bearing on voters request for a ballot

6. Do you think that the absentee ballot pilot project generally served the voter well?

Yes 14

Comments: Very professional, can't hurt

7. How many times per week did you receive from the Town Clerk or Registrars of Voters a list of potential absentee ballot applicants?

3 said three times a week

3 said once a week

2 said none

8. Did you encounter any difficulties with voters in ascertaining whether they in fact needed an absentee ballot application and/or assistance in completing an absentee ballot application?

No 14

Comments: Prospective voters very happy and satisfied

9. Did persons identified as potential absentee ballot applicants generally receive you well?

Yes 14

Comments: Potential absentee ballot applicants generally appreciative and grateful.

10. Did you experience any occasion or instance of a potential absentee ballot applicant complaining about or being unhappy with the procedures for obtaining an absentee ballot application under the pilot?

No 13

Yes 1

Comments: Some said they had already been sent an application

11. Did you experience any occasion or instance of a potential absentee ballot applicant being pleased with the procedures for obtaining an absentee ballot application under the pilot?

No 1

Yes 13

Comments: Happy about new procedures, they felt at ease, most were pleased, and delighted. Pleased no unsolicited applications and contact was by phone, phone calls appreciated, happy to have a visitor, felt it was fairer.

12. Did you experience any difficulty working as a pair with the absentee ballot coordinator appointed by the other party's appointing Registrar.

No 13

Comments: Found working together very rewarding, never discussed party affiliation

Yes: 1

Comments: Scheduling time with partner ABC was difficult

13. How many voters requesting assistance in the completion of their ballot were unable to indicate a preference or cast their ballot?

All were able to cast ballots without problems

14. Did you receive adequate direction from the Registrars of Voters or other sources concerning your duties in the pilot program?

All said yes

Comments: Well explained, direction and assistance, helpful, initial meeting and subsequent weekly meetings very good. No problems. Adequate instructions and training, information meetings all questions answered.

15. Do you have any suggestions for improvement in communications or direction with the Registrars of Voters?

When candidate calls or brings in a name, have the candidate call ROV

Start early October late September

Use fax or email

Cover more voters if not coupled up

Design a log to indicate request for applications

16. How many apartment complexes or multi-family dwellings did you visit?

None 7

One 1

Two 1

Three 3

Four 1

17. Do you favor the extension of supervised voting, which is presently required at nursing homes with more than 20 voters, to apartment complexes or multi-family dwellings where more than 20 voters request absentee ballots?

Yes 7

Comments: Insure all parties represented, nursing home residents too easily confused, ABCs different parties, impartial, no pressure.

No 2

Comments: Help is available from family. Favor present method used for multi family swellings.

18. Do you think that there was sufficient publicity concerning the absentee voting pilot program in your town?

No 8

Comments: Very little publicly, had to explain to voters, suggest weekly reminder in newspaper. Better information, periodicals, fliers, visits to voters' residence, radio, TV and newspaper.

Yes 4

Comments: Most voters said they know about program, New Haven Registrar was late in publicizing.

19. Do you favor removing the ability of candidates, campaign and party workers to distribute applications?

Yes 13

Comments: Removing candidate and party workers would make absentee ballot process more voter orientated and professional. Voters seemed to like it, reduces corruption and coercion. ABC procedure good one, eliminate undo influence, remove pressure.

No 1

Comment: One person said candidate and party workers need to interact with voters.

20. Do you favor limiting the distribution of absentee ballot application forms to election officials such as the Town Clerk, Registrar of Voters or Absentee Ballot Coordinators?

Yes 11

Comments: Reduce corruption and coercion, centralizes distribution point, keep process legitimate.

No 2

21. Do you favor limiting the class of individuals who may assist a voter in the completion of an absentee ballot application form to election officials such as the Town Clerk, Registrar of Voters or Absentee Ballot Coordinators and personal designees of the applicant who are members of the applicant's family or health care providers?

Yes 12

Comments: To all except health care providers, potential for abuse lessened, individuals pledge to be impartial. Voter should have right to assistance from reliable persons, reduces corruption and coercion, give voter opportunity to vote in peace, and eliminates partisan influence

No 1

22. Under the pilot program, a person is eligible to serve as an Absentee Ballot Coordinator unless he/she is a member of a town committee, a town employee, or is working for a candidate or political party in the election. Do you favor or oppose such restrictions on the eligibility to serve as an absentee ballot coordinator?

Favor All Restrictions: 10

Comments: Keep integrity, restrictions help impartiality. Program eliminate political brainwashing and ensures honest approach, removes conflict of interest, no pressure

Favor some: 3

Comments: Town workers, town committees and town employees ok

23. Were there any instances where a voter's name was provided to you as in need of an absentee ballot application, but the town clerk, registrar of voters or absentee ballot coordinator subsequently learned that the voter denied making such a request?

No 14

24. Would you support or oppose the extension of the absentee voting pilot project as a statewide mandate? Yes/No (Circle one)

Yes 12

Comments: Definite improvement, support mandate, if it works, do it again. Like controls in program, it's a good idea, prevents fraud, protection from harassment, fair and more honest, believe process was fair and went well

25. Would you serve as an Absentee Ballot Coordinator in the future?

Yes 10

Comments: ABC adds class and professionalism to voting process. Could cover more votes if not paired with others.

No 1

26. What, if anything, would you change concerning your duties as a ABC?

Wouldn't change a thing

Keep pretty much as is, worked well, voter was satisfied, ABCs worked in harmony
Telephone contact doesn't require two ABCs. Allow phone contact by one member of team then have both present for assistance.

27. If you have any other opinions or suggestions concerning your experience with the absentee ballot pilot project please express your opinion here:

More time for visits with prospective voters
Better and more publicity
Leave more writing space on spreadsheet
Start program earlier
Voters appreciated calls
Protect from harassment



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
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Absentee Voting Reform Pilot Project
EVALUATION
For: Candidates and Party Chairs
Public Act 2003-227

1. In what capacity did you participate in the 2003 Absentee Ballot Pilot Project?

Candidate 27

Political Party Chairperson 1

2. Do you feel that the absentee voting pilot procedures were an improvement over the regular absentee ballot application procedures used in prior elections or primaries?

Yes 15

Comments: Better service to voter, less chance of abuse, keep things honest, legitimate, process good idea, fewer people handled ballots. Old system open to abuse, less pressure by political groups, less opportunity for manipulation, insured integrity of AB process

Not sure 2

No 6

Comments: Don't Believe adequate time nor personnel were made available to ensure that all citizens were allowed access to vote, less personal, too cumbersome, lack publicity, fewer people voted.

3. Do you feel that the absentee voting pilot procedures favorably or unfavorably affected the integrity of the absentee ballot process?

Favorably/Unfavorably/not at all. (Circle one)

Favorable 15

Comments: Less chance of abuse no cheating, process good idea, fewer handle the ballot the better, allows people to have privacy, better control

Unfavorable 2

Comments: some voters did not receive ballots

Not at all 5

Comments: System can still be corrupted, parties still have ability to influence voters and also ability of citizen to vote should be paramount,

4. In your opinion, was the revised absentee ballot application form used in the pilot an improvement over the absentee ballot application form used in your town in prior elections or primaries? Yes/No (Circle one)

No 3

Comments: never saw one before

Yes 15

Comments: Positive feedback from AB voter, voting should be personal, not subject to public view, kept certain individuals from abusing the system

Don't know or no comment 5

5. One of the components of the pilot program was that the list of absentee ballot applicants as well as the executed applications themselves were kept confidential until three days before the election. Do you favor this confidentiality component over the current law that provides that the list of absentee ballot applicants and the applications are public records and open to inspection by anyone?

No 7

Comments: Give chance to question applicant, favor public records

Yes 18

Comments: Privacy, less pressure on those filling out application, less opportunity for abuse.

6. Another component of the pilot program was to restrict distribution of absentee ballot applications to the town clerk, registrar of voters and a neutral corps of absentee ballot coordinators appointed by each registrar. Do you favor this approach over the procedures used in prior elections or primaries, which permit candidates, political parties and their agents to distribute blank absentee ballot applications and assist voters in the completion of absentee ballot applications?

No 8

Comments: Fewer ballots were available, too little time allotted for education of the public or for training of Clerk and ABCs. Many voters felt better if I assisted, less personal, adds unnecessary bureaucracy, control too concentrated

Yes 18

Comments: Parties can persuade voter in their favor, limits contact to biased people, the fewer people that handle ballots the better. Reduce bias, keep parties and candidates out of process to reduce chances of irregularities. Exposure to corruption is eliminated, possibility for coercion.

7. Do you think that the absentee ballot pilot project generally served the voter well?

No 6

Comments: He is sure that some voters did not vote because they were not as available. Fewer voters were active, keep it simple, adds additional layer of bureaucracy and expense.

Yes 16

Comments: Served voter who truly needed one, all who needed a ballot got one, insured integrity without additional hurdles for voters, system worked.

8. Did you provide lists of names of persons who requested absentee ballots to the Town Clerk or Registrars of Voters?

Yes 12

No 13

Don't know 1

9. Were you pleased with the way your lists were handled?

Yes 13

Comments: In only one instance voter didn't get one

No 1

Comments: Third party obstacle from Town Clerk and ROV

NA 5

10. Did you experience any occasion or instance of a potential absentee ballot applicant complaining about or being unhappy with the procedures for obtaining an absentee ballot application under the pilot?

Yes 5

Comments: Not enough communication, voters were confused, seniors expected to be provided with applications and ballots the same as in the past, no notice in timely manor, obstacles, neglect from TC and ROV, calls from people who did not receive ballots

NO 20

11. Did you experience any occasion or instance of a potential absentee ballot applicant being pleased with the procedures for obtaining an absentee ballot application under the pilot?

Yes 4

Comments: That ballots were handled properly, voters felt more secure, felt more comfortable with a familiar face

NO 18

12. Do you regularly campaign at apartment complexes or multi family dwellings?

Yes	13
NO	12
NA	1

13. Do you favor the extension of supervised voting, which is presently required at nursing homes with more than 20 voters, to apartment complexes or multi-family dwellings where more than 20 voters request absentee ballots?

Yes	16
Comments:	Some candidates have a way of infiltrating complexes, easy for elderly and poor voter to be mislead, efforts need to be made to educate, there should be an additional audit to verify need, the benefits outweigh minor comments, voters will not be influenced, good idea, only if a large percent of voters in building.
NO	6
Comments:	Supervised voting is an invitation to manipulation, cumbersome to monitor
Uncertain	1
No opinion	1

14. Do you think that there was sufficient publicity concerning the absentee voting pilot program in your town?

Yes	6
Comments:	based on limited time
No or don't know	16
Comments:	Sooner would be better, last minute decision and insufficient resources provided, not enough public awareness, most people confused, didn't see any, no public notice by Town Clerk

15. Do you favor removing the ability of candidates, campaign and party workers to distribute applications?

Yes	19
Comments:	City Clerk should be only source, cuts down on party involvement and persuasion, undue influence, eliminates possibility of improper action or use of misinformation virtually eliminates coercion. Favor voter access to applications and too much room for pressure
No	6
Comments:	Some seniors comfortable with familiar face. Do not want right to talk and visit with people taken away

16. Do you favor limiting the distribution of absentee ballot application forms to election officials such as the Town Clerk, Registrar of Voters or Absentee Ballot Coordinators?

Yes 17

Comments: To avoid rampant abuses with applications and ballots, fewer people are involved

No 7

Comments: Resources are limited, too cumbersome, voters expect it, too restrictive, old way better.

17. Do you favor limiting the class of individuals who may assist a voter in the completion of an absentee ballot application form to election officials such as the Town Clerk, Registrar of Voters or Absentee Ballot Coordinators and personal designees of the applicant who are members of the applicant's family or health care providers?

Yes 19

Comments: Less people, less influence. It should be someone who knows the wishes of the voter, people in this role should be properly trained and clearly understand the laws. Be unbiased. Prevents fraud and abuse to a certain degree. Town Clerk should be included only when not on ballot

No 6

Comments: This question is disturbing. Too many regulations, scare potential voters, too much control

18. Under the pilot program, a person is eligible to serve as an absentee ballot coordinator unless he/she is a member of a town committee, a town employee, or is working for a candidate or political party in the election. Do you favor or oppose such restrictions on the eligibility to serve as an absentee ballot coordinator?

Favor all 19

Comments: Fewer people the less influence. ABC should be unbiased

Favor some 4

Comments: Feels Town Committee member should be eligible

Oppose all 2

Comments: Takes away rights

19. Did the new procedures in the pilot program enable you to focus on other aspects of your campaign?

Yes 10

Comments: Didn't have to worry about who tried to secure votes illegally, less handling of applications and paper work follow up, More time to campaign

No 6

Comments: It complicated his campaign, waste of time and money. Candidate just said he supplied City Clerk with list as always.

20. Would you support or oppose the extension of the absentee voting pilot project as a statewide mandate?

Yes 16

Comments: As long as state funds it and city and town support it. Better control, clearly makes process better. Sees benefit of program, worked well

No 6

Comments: Each town should have a say if they want to participate, not adequately defined. Opposed to unfunded state mandates, unfunded and under funded.

Don't know 1

21. If you have any other opinions or suggestions concerning your experience with the absentee ballot pilot project please express your opinion here:

Stamped envelope should be included with application and ballot

Pleased with tight restriction for validating ballot

New idea clumsy, costly and too restrictive.

In favor of past practice, leave process as it currently is



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Absentee Voting Reform Pilot Project
EVALUATION
For: Voters
Public Act 2003-227

1. Did you ever vote by absentee ballot in any previous election? Yes/No (Circle one)

No 5
Yes 8

2. Do you feel that the absentee voting pilot procedures were an improvement over the regular absentee ballot application procedures used in prior elections or primaries?

Yes 7

Comments: Love the company, procedure well explained by ABC, had no problem voting, they came without having to ask for help.

NA 2

Does not remember 1

Doesn't Matter 1

No 1

3. Do you feel that the absentee voting pilot procedures favorably or unfavorably affected the integrity of the absentee ballot process?

Favorable 5

Comments: Foolproof, has always been good, very discreet, improvement, cooperation of ABC excellent

Not at all 3

No experience or no opinion 2

4. In your opinion, was the revised absentee ballot application form used in the pilot an improvement over the absentee ballot application form used in your town in prior elections or primaries?

Yes 5

Comments: Sent ballots on time, this years format and procedures well explained

5. One of the components of the pilot program was that the list of absentee ballot applicants as well as the executed applications themselves were kept confidential until three days before the election. Do you favor this confidentiality component over the current law that provides that the list of absentee ballot applicants and the applications are public records and open to inspection by anyone?

Yes 9

Comments: Well presented and confidential, always should be confidential

6. Another component of the pilot program was to restrict distribution of absentee ballot applications to the town clerk, registrar of voters and a neutral corps of absentee ballot coordinators appointed by each registrar.

Do you favor this approach over the procedures used in prior elections or primaries, which permit candidates, political parties and their agents to distribute blank absentee ballot applications and assist voters in the completion of absentee ballot applications?

Yes 8

Comments: Less chance of impropriety, new procedure eliminates any chance of abuse

No 2

Comments: Too cumbersome

7. Do you think that the absentee ballot pilot project generally served you well?

Yes 11

8. Did you have any problem obtaining an absentee ballot application?

No 12

Comments: Satisfied and appreciated the help, ABC came to the door.

9. Did you ask anyone to obtain an application for you? Yes/No (Circle one)

No 10

Yes 2

Comments: Husband and West Haven City Clerk

10. Were you happy or unhappy with the procedures for obtaining an absentee ballot application under the pilot?

Happy 10

Comments: Easy, good instructions, extremely happy and satisfied, ABC very professional and Helpful no fuss.

Unhappy 1

Comments: They waited too long to contact her but did come right away

11. Did you require assistance in the completion of your application or ballot?

No 11

Yes 1

Comments: ABC was most polite and helpful with assistance

12. Were you happy with the service you received in obtaining an absentee ballot application or your request for assistance in completing an absentee ballot application?

Yes 10

Comments: Excellent, very professional, Town Clerk was there for help, friendly. Served residents well, this method gratifying and satisfactory all questions were answered intelligently, not pushed

No 1

13. How did you learn about the new absentee ballot procedures in your town?

Town Clerk

ABC

Neighbor

Registrar of Voters

Read it in newspaper

Bulletin delivered explained procedure

Call from Representative

14 As a result of this pilot program, did you have more or less contact with candidates?

Three said less contact, others said about the same

15. Were you happy or unhappy about the level of contact from the candidate?

Happy / Unhappy (Circle One)

Happy 6

Unhappy 1

16. Do you favor removing the ability of candidates, campaign and party workers to distribute applications?

No 4

Comments: Free to do as they please as long as they don't pressure one way or the other

Yes 6

Comments: This method less political and more professional, fair and well presented, impartial and confidential. One thinks Town Clerks only.

17. Do you favor limiting the distribution of absentee ballot application forms to election officials such as the Town Clerk, Registrar of Voters or Absentee Ballot Coordinators?

Yes 8

Comments: As long as they are not running for office, politics was kept out of presentation and coordinator was professional.

18. Would you support or oppose the extension of the absentee voting pilot project as a statewide mandate

Yes support 7

Comments: Worked very well, simple, no fuss. It is needed for fair voting. This program is more helpful, less politics, well presented.

19. If you have any other opinions or suggestions concerning your experience with the absentee ballot pilot project please express your opinion here:

Very satisfied

Voter wants the freedom to vote

AB Pilot program presentation extremely helpful

Easy to follow

ABCs knowledgeable and friendly and non political, a pleasure

ABCs were pleasant and worked well with residents and did sufficient job implementing procedure



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WEST HAVEN
Absentee Voting Reform Pilot Project
EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE
For: Town Clerks and Registrars of Voters
Public Act 2003-227

1. In what capacity did you participate in the 2003 Absentee Voting Reform Pilot Project? (Check one)

Town Clerks Deborah Collins & Sharon Recchia, Asst. Town Clerk
Registrar of Voters Jo Ann Callegari & Mary Marino

2. Do you feel that the absentee voting pilot procedures were an improvement over the regular absentee ballot application procedures used in prior elections or primaries? Yes/No (Circle one)

ROV Yes, Excellent

ROV Yes, It cut down on duplication of applications sent out

TC Yes, ABC help with senior complex, kept seniors happy, less intimidated

TC Yes

3. Do you feel that the absentee voting pilot procedures favorably or unfavorably affected the integrity of the absentee ballot process?

ROV Favorably, eliminated intimidation and fraud

ROV Favorably, choices without pressure, ABCs there for assistance

TC Favorably, because the voter had to make his contact or if the campaign handed in list, they were checked

TC Favorable

4. In your opinion, was the revised absentee ballot application form used in the pilot an improvement over the absentee ballot application form used in your town in prior elections or primaries? Yes/No (Circle one)

Explain why or why not:

ROV Yes, clarification improved, clearer for voter

ROV Yes form was easier to understand

TC Yes, larger print, bold print for penalties and the assister telephone number

TC Yes

5. One of the components of the pilot program was that the list of absentee ballot applicants as well as the executed applications themselves were kept confidential until three days before the election. Do you favor this confidentiality component over the current law that provides that the list of absentee ballot applicants and the applications are public records and open to inspection by anyone?

ROV Yes, favor confidentiality, helped eliminate intimidation especially for senior voters

ROV Yes Favor confidentiality, any one can turn in names and have city clerk check for duplication

TC Yes favor confidentiality

TC Yes favor Confidentiality

6. Another component of the pilot program was to restrict distribution of absentee ballot applications to the town clerk, registrar of voters and a neutral corps of absentee ballot coordinators appointed by each registrar. Do you favor this approach over the procedures used in prior elections or primaries, which permit candidates, political parties and their agents to distribute blank absentee ballot applications and assist voters in the completion of absentee ballot applications?

ROV Yes, definitively favor this procedure, contained and controlled

ROV Yes, ABCs have commented those voters are pleased with not having to deal with some pushy candidates.

TC Yes, because when the candidates and parties went door to door, here was pressure

TC Yes soliciting is confined only to the ABC and chosen elected officials

7. Do you think that the absentee ballot pilot project generally served the voter well?

ROV Yes

ROV Overall ABC worked well together, voters were pleased, as always some did not understand

TC Yes

TC Yes

8. Did you encounter any difficulties with voters in ascertaining whether they in fact needed an absentee ballot application and/or assistance in completing an absentee ballot application?

ROV No, no difficulty whatsoever

ROV No, only comment from ABCs was that they found it difficult at times to be together to make phone calls to voters

TC No

TC Yes

9. Did you experience any occasion or instance of a potential absentee ballot applicant complaining about or being unhappy with the procedures for obtaining an absentee ballot application under the pilot?

ROV No, no complaints, voters were understanding and cooperative with procedure

ROV Yes Only through the remarks heard from ABC from voters who were not aware of program until the week before

TC Yes, a student who filled out the old application, it was resolved. One person said she didn't get newspaper and was dependent on parties to call, she suggested that it would be a good idea to have a list of people that they could call to update thought out the year.

TC Yes, Student out of town at college that filled out old application

10. Did you experience any occasion or instance of a potential absentee ballot applicant being pleased with the new procedures for obtaining an absentee ballot application under the pilot?

ROV Yes, because it eliminated harassment by politicians

ROV Yes, through ABCs

TC Yes, most absentee voters who had the opportunity to meet the ABC said that they felt less pressure

TC No

11. Do you think that there was sufficient publicity concerning the absentee voting pilot program in your town?

ROV No, Article in Register a week too late, also publicity could have been repeated.

ROV No, Two town papers published notices, New Haven Registrar too late.

TC No, if we had more time I think the larger paper should do two notices and also radio and website

TC No, more time could have been used for educate the voter, more exposure in newspaper.

12. Do you favor removing the ability of candidates, campaign and party workers to distribute applications?

ROV Yes by keeping distribution of applicants to the City Clerk and ABC, less duplication

ROV Yes, Eliminated duplications and intimidations and fraud

TC Yes, candidate should stay away, they pressure the voter

TC Yes, I think it is very intimidating with two candidates at your door

13. Do you favor limiting the distribution of absentee ballot application forms to election officials such as the Town Clerk, Registrar of Voters or Absentee Ballot Application Coordinators?

ROV Yes, Keeps AB returns in proportion to number sent out and better control

ROV Yes, feels it kept numbers of applications sent out more in line with applications a ballots returned, less duplication

TC Yes, application can only be given by the above official

TC Yes, application can only be handed out by the above people

14. Do you favor limiting the class of individuals who may assist a voter in the completion of an absentee ballot application form to election officials such as the Town Clerk, Registrar of Voters or Absentee Ballot Coordinators and personal designees of the applicant who are members of the applicant's family or health care providers?

ROV Yes, reduces duplication, reduces fraud

ROV Yes, voter can make sound choices if not watched over by candidates and campaign workers

TC Yes, keeps candidates and political parties away from voters

TC Yes, only the ABC coordinator and certain elected officials can give out application

15. Do you have other suggestions for how to improve the absentee voting process?

ROV Telephoning applicants by ABCs could be streamlined

ROV More publication of program and an earlier start

16. Under the pilot program, a person is eligible to serve as an absentee ballot coordinator unless he/she is a member of a town committee, a town employee, or is working for a candidate or political party in the election. Do you favor or oppose such restrictions on the eligibility to serve as an absentee ballot coordinator?

ROV Favor all restrictions, excellent restrictions

ROV Favor all restrictions, should be restrictions, maybe process of choosing an eligible person can be made easier.

TC Favor some restrictions, we would be in a better position to hire AB coordinator if we had a bigger pool to choose from

TC Favor some restrictions

17. (To be answered by Town Clerks) Please provide the following statistical information concerning the use of absentee ballots in your town:

Number of requests for applications	530
Number of applications returned	500
Number of ballots sent out	495
Number of ballots returned	350
Number of ballots counted	344
Number of ballots rejected	

18. (To be answered by Town Clerks) Please provide the number of ballots sent out and returned in the *last* municipal election (2001)

Number of ballots sent out	700
Number of ballots returned	600

19. Please identify the number of voters requesting an absentee ballot because of:

Illness	100
Physical Disability	200
Out of town	100
Religious	0
Military	
Poll worker	20

20. Did the Absentee Voting Pilot Program affect or reduce the number of multiple applications from the same voter?

TC	Yes, the seniors will fill out 4 or 5 or forget
TC	Reduce canvassing by candidates plus phone calls made at headquarter increased duplicate applications.

21. How many voters required assistance in the completion of their absentee ballot *applications*?

TC	maybe 20
TC	about 20

22. How many voters required assistance in the completion of their absentee *ballots*?

TC	20
TC	20

23. Were there any instances where a voter's name was provided to the town clerk as in need of an absentee ballot application, but the town clerk, registrar of voters or absentee ballot coordinator subsequently learned that the voter denied making such a request?

TC	No
TC	No

24. (To be answered by Registrars of Voters) Did you have any difficulty finding qualified people to serve as absentee ballot coordinators? Yes/No (Circle one)

ROV No

ROV Yes, because of short amount of time given before start of pilot, it was difficult to find people who were qualified and willing to take on this responsibility

25. (To be answered by Registrars of Voters) What, if anything, did you pay your absentee ballot coordinators?

ROV \$250 from city funds

ROV \$250

26. (To be answered by Registrars of Voters) What were your total expenditures for absentee ballot coordinators? If you paid them hourly, please indicate their hourly wage

ROV They were paid \$250 each, 6 ABCs, 3 Rep., 3 Dem.

ROV \$1500. both parties

27. (To be answered by Registrars of Voters) How much did your absentee ballot coordinators work? Please quantify in terms of days or hours worked and number of site visits.

ROV No more that 10 or 12hours per ABC

ROV Since we did not keep a log of time spent by ABCs it is difficult to say

28. Should absentee ballot coordinators be paid? Yes/No
If yes, from what source?

ROV yes city funds

ROV Yes, City budget

TC Yes, time and patience. ABCs had to have a lot of both

TC Yes, time and effort put into the program

29. Would you support or oppose the extension of the absentee voting pilot project as a statewide mandate? Yes/

ROV Yes, Jeff Garfield's excellent planning and guidance made the program successful. Hopefully it will be adopted by State Leg.

ROV Yes, Believe program has merit. It would have to be tailored to fit needs of whole state.

TC Yes, to keep voter fraud out of the absentee ballot vote

TC Yes Support, it would cut down on soliciting of absentee ballots

30. If you have any other opinions or suggestions concerning your experience with the absentee voting pilot project please express your opinion here:

ROV This process may be difficult in a primary, especially 3 way, may have to be redesigned. Jeff Garfield's excellent planning and guidance made it successful

ROV Overall I think the program has possibilities. Perhaps telephoning can be done by one or the other ABCs not both together

TC The list of AB applications being confidential, I didn't receive one call about being harassed. No problem with literature that showed the people how to vote, they had no list of absentee ballot applicants to call or send literature to.

WEST HAVEN

Absentee Voting Reform Pilot Project EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE For: Candidates and Party Chairs Public Act 2003-227

1. In what capacity did you participate in the 2003 Absentee Ballot Pilot Project?

Candidate 14
Political Party Chairperson 0

2. Do you feel that the absentee voting pilot procedures were an improvement over the regular absentee ballot application procedures used in prior elections or primaries?

Yes 12
Comments: Better service to voter, less chance of abuse, keep things honest, legitimate, process good idea, fewer people handled ballots Old system open to abuse, less pressure by political group

No 1
Comments: Don't believe adequate time nor personnel were made available to ensure that all citizens were allowed access to vote

Not sure 1

3. Do you feel that the absentee voting pilot procedures favorably or unfavorably affected the integrity of the absentee ballot process?

Favorable 12
Comments: Less chance of abuse, no cheating, process good idea, fewer handle the ballot the better, allows people to have privacy, better control

No at all, 2
Comments: Parties still have ability to influence voters
Also ability of citizen to vote should be paramount

4. In your opinion, was the revised absentee ballot application form used in the pilot an improvement over the absentee ballot application form used in your town in prior elections or primaries?

Yes 9

Comments: Positive feedback from AB voter, voting should be personal, not subject to public view

No 1

Don't know 1

5. One of the components of the pilot program was that the list of absentee ballot applicants as well as the executed applications themselves were kept confidential until three days before the election. Do you favor this confidentiality component over the current law that provides that the list of absentee ballot applicants and the applications are public records and open to inspection by anyone?

Yes favor confidentiality 12

Comments: Privacy, don't trust political parties to keep information confidential, less pressure on those filling out application

No 1

Give chance to question applicant

6. Another component of the pilot program was to restrict distribution of absentee ballot applications to the town clerk, registrar of voters and a neutral corps of absentee ballot coordinators appointed by each registrar. Do you favor this approach over the procedures used in prior elections or primaries, which permit candidates, political parties and their agents to distribute blank absentee ballot applications and assist voters in the completion of absentee ballot applications?

Yes 11

Comments: Parties can persuade voter in their favor, limits contact to biased people, the fewer people that handle ballots to better.

No 4

Comments: Fewer ballots were available, too little time allotted for education of the public or for training of clerk and ABCs. Many voters felt better if candidate assisted.

7. Do you think that the absentee ballot pilot project generally served the voter well? explain your answer:

Yes 12

Comments: Served voter who truly needed one, all who needed a ballot got one.

No 2
Comments: Sure that some voters did not vote because
applications were not as available

8. Did you provide lists of names of persons who requested absentee ballots to the Town Clerk or Registrars of Voters?

No 4
Yes 10

9. Were you pleased with the way your lists were handled?

Yes 11, in only one instance voter didn't get one.

10. Did you experience any occasion or instance of a potential absentee ballot applicant complaining about or being unhappy with the procedures for obtaining an absentee ballot application under the pilot?

Yes 1, not enough communication, voters were confused
No 13

11. Did you experience any occasion or instance of a potential absentee ballot applicant being pleased with the procedures for obtaining an absentee ballot application under the pilot?

No 8
Yes 4,
Comments: That ballots were handled properly , voters felt
more secure

12. Do you regularly campaign at apartment complexes or multi family dwellings?

Yes 8
No 6

13. Do you favor the extension of supervised voting, which is presently required at nursing homes with more than 20 voters, to apartment complexes or multi-family dwellings where more than 20 voters request absentee ballots?

Yes 11

Comments: Some candidates have a way of infiltrating complexes, easy for elderly and poor voter to be mislead, efforts need to be made to educate, there should be an additional audit to verify need, the benefits out way minor comments

No 2

14. Do you think that there was sufficient publicity concerning the absentee voting pilot program in your town?

Yes 4 based on limited time

No. 8

Comments: Sooner would be better, last minute decision and insufficient resources provided, not enough public awareness

15. Do you favor removing the ability of candidates, campaign and party workers to distribute applications?

Yes 11

Comments: City clerk should be only source, cuts down on party involvement and persuasion, undue influence, eliminates possibility of improper action or use of misinformation virtually eliminates coercion.

No 3

Comments: Benefit overrides chance of abuse, some seniors comfortable with familiar face

16. Do you favor limiting the distribution of absentee ballot application forms to election officials such as the Town Clerk, Registrar of Voters or Absentee Ballot Coordinators?

Yes 10

Comments: To avoid rampant abuses with applications and ballots, fewer people are involved

No 3

Comments: Resources are limited, he would like to provide to his voters

17. Do you favor limiting the class of individuals who may assist a voter in the completion of an absentee ballot application form to election officials such as the Town Clerk, Registrar of Voters or Absentee Ballot Coordinators and personal designees of the applicant who are members of the applicant's family or health care providers?

Yes 11

Comments: Less people, less influence, it should be someone who knows the wishes of the voter, people in this role should be properly trained and clearly understand the laws, be unbiased

No 2

Comments: This question is disturbing. The individual rights of voters needs to be respected.

18. Under the pilot program, a person is eligible to serve as an absentee ballot coordinator unless he/she is a member of a town committee, a town employee, or is working for a candidate or political party in the election. Do you favor or oppose such restrictions on the eligibility to serve as an absentee ballot coordinator?

Favor all 11
Fewer people, less influence

Favor some 2

19. Did the new procedures in the pilot program enable you to focus on other aspects of your campaign?

Yes 7
Comments Didn't have to worry about who tried to secure votes illegally, less handling of applications and paper work follow up

No 6

20. Would you support or oppose the extension of the absentee voting pilot project as a statewide mandate?

Yes 10
Comments: As long as state funds it and city and town support it, better control, clearly makes process better

No 3
Comments: Each town should have a say if they want to participate, not adequately defined

a. If you have any other opinions or suggestions concerning your experience with the absentee ballot pilot project please express your opinion here:

Stamped envelope should be included with application and ballot.

WEST HAVEN

Absentee Voting Reform Pilot Project EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE For: Absentee Ballot Coordinators Public Act 2003-227

1. Do you feel that the absentee voting pilot procedures were an improvement over the regular absentee ballot application procedures used in prior elections or primaries?

Yes 5

Comments: Less fraud, quality communication between ABC and prospective voters was much improved and professional, restricting number of groups in contact with voters gives better control and accountability

2. Do you feel that the absentee voting pilot procedures favorably or unfavorably affected the integrity of the absentee ballot process?

Favorable 5

Comments: More choice, pilot favorably affected integrity of process, enthusiasm for program, straight line toward responsibility, no influence by candidate or party workers

3. In your opinion, was the revised absentee ballot application form used in the pilot an improvement over the absentee ballot application form used in your town in prior elections or primaries?

Yes 4

No 1

Definite improvement, excellent cooperation between voters and ABC
same as before

4. One of the components of the pilot program was that the list of absentee ballot applicants as well as the executed applications themselves were kept confidential until three days before the election. Do you favor this confidentiality component over the current law that provides that the list of absentee ballot applicants and the applications are public records and open to inspection by anyone?

Yes 5

Comments: Always be personal and private, definitely favor confidentiality, more honest and professional, voters felt better about not being troubled by so many people. Fewer days would eliminate influence by candidates and party workers.

5. Another component of the pilot program was to restrict distribution of absentee ballot applications to the town clerk, registrar of voters and a neutral corps of absentee ballot coordinators appointed by each registrar. Do you favor this approach over the procedures used in prior elections or primaries, which permit candidates, political parties and their agents to distribute blank absentee ballot applications and assist voters in the completion of absentee ballot applications?

Yes 4

Comments: Favor the way pilot was done, less fraud, reduces corruption and coercion, voters like their privacy, restricts influence of candidate and party workers

No 1

Comment: Doesn't think candidates or party influence should have any bearing on voters request for a ballot

6. Do you think that the absentee ballot pilot project generally served the voter well?

Yes 5

Comment: Very professional

7. How many times per week did you receive from the Town Clerk or Registrars of Voters a list of potential absentee ballot applicants?

The average was three times

8. Did you encounter any difficulties with voters in ascertaining whether they in fact needed an absentee ballot application and/or assistance in completing an absentee ballot application?

No 5

Comments: Prospective voters very happy and satisfied

9. Did persons identified as potential absentee ballot applicants generally receive you well?

Yes 5

Comments: Potential absentee ballot applicants generally appreciative, grateful

10. Did you experience any occasion or instance of a potential absentee ballot applicant complaining about or being unhappy with the procedures for obtaining an absentee ballot application under the pilot?

No 4

Yes 1 Some said they had already been sent an application

11. Did you experience any occasion or instance of a potential absentee ballot applicant being pleased with the procedures for obtaining an absentee ballot application under the pilot?

Yes	4	Happy about new procedures, they felt at ease, most were pleased, delight
No	1	

12. Did you experience any difficulty working as a pair with the absentee ballot coordinator appointed by the other party's appointing Registrar.

No	4	Found working together very rewarding, never discussed party affiliation
Yes	1	Scheduling time with partner ABC was difficult

13. How many voters requesting assistance in the completion of their ballot were unable to indicate a preference or cast their ballot?

All were able to cast ballots without problems

14. Did you receive adequate direction from the Registrars of Voters or other sources concerning your duties in the pilot program?

Yes	5	
Comments:		Well explained, direction and assistance, helpful, initial meeting and subsequent weekly meetings were very good.

15. Do you have any suggestions for improvement in communications or direction with the Registrars of Voters?

When candidate calls or brings in name, have candidate call ROV
Start early October late September,
Use fax or email
Cover more voters if not coupled up
Design a log to indicate requests for applications

16. How many apartment complexes or multi-family dwellings did you visit?

None	2
One	1
Two	1
Four	1

17. Do you favor the extension of supervised voting, which is presently required at nursing homes with more than 20 voters, to apartment complexes or multi-family dwellings where more than 20 voters request absentee ballots?

No prior experience	1	
Yes	1	
Favor present method used for multi family dwellings		1

18. Do you think that there was sufficient publicity concerning the absentee voting pilot program in your town?

No 1 Better information, periodicals, filers visits to voter's residence, radio, TV and Newspaper

Yes 3 But not timely, most voters said they knew about program, New Haven Registrar was late in publicizing

19. Do you favor removing the ability of candidates, campaign and party workers to distribute applications?

Yes 4

Comments: Removing candidate and party workers would make absentee ballot process more voter orientated and professional. Voters seemed to like it, reduces corruption and coercion.

20. Do you favor limiting the distribution of absentee ballot application forms to election officials such as the Town Clerk, Registrar of Voters or Absentee Ballot Coordinators?

Yes 4

Comments: Reduce corruption and coercion, centralizes distribution point

21. Do you favor limiting the class of individuals who may assist a voter in the completion of an absentee ballot application form to election officials such as the Town Clerk, Registrar of Voters or Absentee Ballot Coordinators and personal designees of the applicant who are members of the applicant's family or health care providers?

Yes 4

Comments: Voter should have right to assistance from reliable persons, reduces corruption and coercion, give voter opportunity to vote in peace, and eliminates partisan influence.

22. Under the pilot program, a person is eligible to serve as an Absentee Ballot Coordinator unless he/she is a member of a town committee, a town employee, or is working for a candidate or political party in the election. Do you favor or oppose such restrictions on the eligibility to serve as an absentee ballot coordinator?

Favor All Restrictions 4

Comments Program eliminates political brainwashing and ensures honest approach, removes conflict of interest, no pressure

23. Were there any instances where a voter's name was provided to you as in need of an absentee ballot application, but the town clerk, registrar of voters or absentee ballot coordinator subsequently learned that the voter denied making such a request?

No 4

24. Would you support or oppose the extension of the absentee voting pilot project as a statewide mandate?

Yes 4

Comments: Definite improvement, support mandate, if it works, do it again, likes controls in program

25. Would you serve as an Absentee Ballot Coordinator in the future?

Yes 4

Comments: ABC adds class and professionalism to voting process
could cover more voters if not paired with others

26. What, if anything, would you change concerning your duties as a ABC?

Keep pretty much as is, worked well, voter was satisfied, ABC worked in harmony

Telephone contact doesn't require two ABC. Allow phone contact by one member of team then have both present for assistance

27. If you have any other opinions or suggestions concerning your experience with the absentee ballot pilot project please express your opinion here:

More time for visits with prospective voters

Better and more publicity

Leave more writing space on spread sheet

Start program earlier

WEST HAVEN
Absentee Voting Reform Pilot Project
EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE
For: Voters
Public Act 2003-227

1. Did you ever vote by absentee ballot in any previous election? Yes/No (Circle one)

No 3
Yes 4

2. Do you feel that the absentee voting pilot procedures were an improvement over the regular absentee ballot application procedures used in prior elections or primaries?

First time AB voter 1
Yes 6

Comments: Love the company, procedure well explained by ABC, had no problem voting, they came without having to ask for help

3. Do you feel that the absentee voting pilot procedures favorably or unfavorably affected the integrity of the absentee ballot process?

Favorably 4

Comments: Has always been good, very discreet, improvement, cooperation of ABC excellent

4. In your opinion, was the revised absentee ballot application form used in the pilot an improvement over the absentee ballot application form used in your town in prior elections or primaries?

Yes 4

No 1 had no prior experience

5. One of the components of the pilot program was that the list of absentee ballot applicants as well as the executed applications themselves were kept confidential until three days before the election. Do you favor this confidentiality component over the current law that provides that the list of absentee ballot applicants and the applications are public records and open to inspection by anyone?

Yes 5

Comments: Well presented and confidential, always should be confidential

6. Another component of the pilot program was to restrict distribution of absentee ballot applications to the town clerk, registrar of voters and a neutral corps of absentee ballot coordinators appointed by each registrar.

Do you favor this approach over the procedures used in prior elections or primaries, which permit candidates, political parties and their agents to distribute blank absentee ballot applications and assist voters in the completion of absentee ballot applications?

No 1

No prior experience 1

Yes 4

Comments: Unable to get out, trust people who come in to my home
ABC enthusiastic, willing to help

7. Do you think that the absentee ballot pilot project generally served you well?

Yes 6 Served residents well

8. Did you have any problem obtaining an absentee ballot application? Yes/No (Circle one)

No 7

Satisfied and appreciated help

9. Did you ask anyone to obtain an application for you? Yes/No (Circle one)

No 5

Yes 1, West Haven City Clerk

10. Were you happy or unhappy with the procedures for obtaining an absentee ballot application under the pilot?

Happy 5

Comments: Extremely happy and satisfied, ABC very professional and helpful, no fuss

Unhappy 1

Comments: They waited too long to contact her but did come right away

11. Did you require assistance in the completion of your application or ballot?

No 5

Yes 1 ABC was most polite and helpful with assistance

12. Were you happy with the service you received in obtaining an absentee ballot application or your request for assistance in completing an absentee ballot application?

Yes 5

Comments: Served residents well, this method gratifying and satisfactory all questions were answered intelligently, not pushed

13. How did you learn about the new absentee ballot procedures in your town?

Registrar of Voters

Read it in paper

Newspaper

Bulletin delivered explaining procedure

Had a call from Representatives

Didn't know about it until they came

14 As a result of this pilot program, did you have more or less contact with candidates?

Less contact 3

None 1

Same 1

Never had any contact 1

15. Were you happy or unhappy about the level of contact from the candidate?

Happy 4

Unhappy 1

16. Do you favor removing the ability of candidates, campaign and party workers to distribute applications?

No 3

Comments: Free to do as they please
As long as they don't pressure one way or the other

Yes 3

Comments: This method less political and more professional, fair and well presented, impartial and confidential

17. Do you favor limiting the distribution of absentee ballot application forms to election officials such as the Town Clerk, Registrar of Voters or Absentee Ballot Coordinators?

No 1

Yes 5

Comments: Politics was kept out of presentation and coordinator was professional
Prefers impartial and confidentiality

18. Would you support or oppose the extension of the absentee voting pilot project as a statewide mandate?

Yes 4

Comments: worked very well, simple, no fuss

It is needed for fair voting

This program is more helpful, less politics, well presented

No 2

19. If you have any other opinions or suggestions concerning your experience with the absentee ballot pilot project please express your opinion here:

Voter wants the freedom to vote

AB Pilot program presents at Morrison Manor prior to election extremely helpful

Easy to follow

ABCs knowledgeable and friendly and non political, a pleasure

ABCs were pleasant and worked well with residents and did sufficient job implementing procedure.



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
STATE ELECTIONS ENFORCEMENT COMMISSION
20 Trinity Street - Suite 101 • Hartford, Connecticut 06106 - 1628

WINSTED
Absentee Voting Reform Pilot Project
EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE
For: Town Clerks and Registrars of Voters
Public Act 2003-227

1. In what capacity did you participate in the 2003 Absentee Voting Reform Pilot Project?

Town Clerk Sheila Sadlack,
Registrar of Voter Carol O'Brien

2. Do you feel that the absentee voting pilot procedures were an improvement over the regular absentee ballot application procedures used in prior elections or primaries?

ROV Yes, hopefully gave voter chance to determine if he really wanted to vote, it can be difficult to say no to someone standing at your door.

Town Clerk Yes, We did not have 80 applications at one time from one interest group.

3. Do you feel that the absentee voting pilot procedures favorably or unfavorably affected the integrity of the absentee ballot process?

ROV Favorably, removed pressure and duplication

Town Clerk Favorably, feels voters who truly needed AB ballot received them

4. In your opinion, was the revised absentee ballot application form used in the pilot an improvement over the absentee ballot application form used in your town in prior elections or primaries? Yes/No (Circle one)

ROV Yes, although basically the same, the new format made it more clear and understandable

Town Clerk No, feels they were about the same

5. One of the components of the pilot program was that the list of absentee ballot applicants as well as the executed applications themselves were kept confidential until three days before the election. Do you favor this confidentiality component over the current law that provides that the list of absentee ballot applicants and the applications are public records and open to inspection by anyone?

ROV Although understand the rationale for this, in free society this is a tough question. Will say yes and no. Might this not leave the entire program open to challenge

Town Clerk Yes, favor confidentiality, feels every voter has right to vote absentee, if they qualify and return ballot when they choose. Names will become public when the check off list at the polls, don't think anyone should be monitored.

6. Another component of the pilot program was to restrict distribution of absentee ballot applications to the town clerk, registrar of voters and a neutral corps of absentee ballot coordinators appointed by each registrar. Do you favor this approach over the procedures used in prior elections or primaries, which permit candidates, political parties and their agents to distribute blank absentee ballot applications and assist voters in the completion of absentee ballot applications? Yes/No (Circle one)

ROV Yes, don't feel anyone should be pressured by group to vote or have anyone follow that person until they have voted.

Town Clerk Yes, again it removes pressure on voter and removes chance of manipulation

7. Do you think that the absentee ballot pilot project generally served the voter well?

ROV Yes, in the beginning we heard complaints from special interest groups, have yet to hear from any voter that they were denied their rights.

Town Clerk Yes

8. Did you encounter any difficulties with voters in ascertaining whether they in fact needed an absentee ballot application and/or assistance in completing an absentee ballot application?

ROV Yes, just a couple. The Dem. Deputy brought in two applications where the ABC's could not reach the person. We mailed it.

9. Did you experience any occasion or instance of a potential absentee ballot applicant complaining about or being unhappy with the procedures for obtaining an absentee ballot application under the pilot? Yes/No (Circle one)

ROV No

Town Clerk No

10. Did you experience any occasion or instance of a potential absentee ballot applicant being pleased with the new procedures for obtaining an absentee ballot application under the pilot?

ROV No

Town Clerk Yes, several people expressed pleasure with the system, found no difference, they requested a ballot, received one, voted and returned it

11. Do you think that there was sufficient publicity concerning the absentee voting pilot program in your town?

ROV There could have been much more specific news coverage

Town Clerk Yes, most people were informed about the program

12. Do you favor removing the ability of candidates, campaign and party workers to distribute applications?

Town Clerk Yes

13. Do you favor limiting the distribution of absentee ballot application forms to election officials such as the Town Clerk, Registrar of Voters or Absentee Ballot Application Coordinators?

ROV Yes

Town Clerk In Winsted applications were previously handed out to many who did not request them. I feel the voter has a right to need a ballot, request one, vote and return it.

14. Do you favor limiting the class of individuals who may assist a voter in the completion of an absentee ballot application form to election officials such as the Town Clerk, Registrar of Voters or Absentee Ballot Coordinators and personal designees of the applicant who are members of the applicant's family or health care providers?

ROV yes

Town Clerk Yes, of course the Town Clerk and Registrars should not if they are on ballot.

15. Do you have other suggestions for how to improve the absentee voting process?

16. Under the pilot program, a person is eligible to serve as an absentee ballot coordinator unless he/she is a member of a town committee, a town employee, or is working for a candidate or political party in the election. Do you favor or oppose such restrictions on the eligibility to serve as an absentee ballot coordinator?

ROV Favor all restrictions, if the state adopts this program let's keep it as neutral as possible

Town Clerk Favor all restrictions, it lessens the chance of abuse of ABs.

17. (To be answered by Town Clerks) Please provide the following statistical information concerning the use of absentee ballots in your town:

Number of requests for applications	195_
Number of applications returned	195
Number of ballots sent out	195
Number of ballots returned	172
Number of ballots counted	166
Number of ballots rejected	6

18. (To be answered by Town Clerks) Please provide the number of ballots sent out and returned in the *last* municipal election (2001)

Number of ballots sent out	229
Number of ballots returned	203

19. Please identify the number of voters requesting an absentee ballot because of:

Illness	26
Physical Disability	90
Out of town	73
Religious	0
Military	5
Poll worker	0
Other	1

20. Did the Absentee Voting Pilot Program affect or reduce the number of multiple applications from the same voter?

Town Clerk Yes, many times we would get the same voter with 2 applications

21. How many voters required assistance in the completion of their absentee ballot *applications*?

Town Clerk None of mine

22. How many voters required assistance in the completion of their absentee *ballots*?

Town Clerk None on mine

23. Were there any instances where a voter's name was provided to the town clerk as in need of an absentee ballot application, but the town clerk, registrar of voters or absentee ballot coordinator subsequently learned that the voter denied making such a request?

Town Clerk Not that I am aware of

24. (To be answered by Registrars of Voters) Did you have any difficulty finding qualified people to serve as absentee ballot coordinators? Yes/No (Circle one)

ROV No

25. (To be answered by Registrars of Voters) What, if anything, did you pay your absentee ballot coordinators

ROV \$10 per hour, from regular elections account

26. (To be answered by Registrars of Voters) What were your total expenditures for absentee ballot coordinators? If you paid them hourly, please indicate their hourly wage

ROV \$10.00

27. (To be answered by Registrars of Voters) How much did your absentee ballot coordinators work? Please quantify in terms of days or hours worked and number of site visits.

ROV Have not seen all the bills yet

28. Should absentee ballot coordinators be paid?

ROV Yes

Town Clerk Yes, from the town

29. Would you support or oppose the extension of the absentee voting pilot project as a statewide mandate?

ROV Would reserve final judgment until I see who votes, who didn't and learn why they did not vote.

Town Clerk Yes, I feel it was a fair process. The individual was protected and was not forced into voting. It cut down on duplicate applications.

30. If you have any other opinions or suggestions concerning your experience with the absentee voting pilot project please express your opinion here:

ROV We had complaints from some candidates as expected. One complaint was there was no representation for the unaffiliated voter. We did have one ABC who was an unaffiliated voter. Perhaps this should be mandated if the program is adopted.

Town Clerk We did get several applications back where they didn't put their name and address. Maybe color-code the boxes to be filled in by the applicant.

WINSTED
Absentee Voting Reform Pilot Project
EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE
For: Candidates and Party Chairs
Public Act 2003-227

1. In what capacity did you participate in the 2003 Absentee Ballot Pilot Project?

Candidate	8
Political Party Chairperson	0

2. Do you feel that the absentee voting pilot procedures were an improvement over the regular absentee ballot application procedures used in prior elections or primaries?

Yes	2
Comments:	insured integrity of AB process

No	3
Comments:	Lack of publicity, fewer people voted

Not familiar enough to comment

3. Do you feel that the absentee voting pilot procedures favorably or unfavorably affected the integrity of the absentee ballot process?

Favorably	4	
Not at all	1	System can still be corrupted
Unfavorable	2	Some voters did not receive ballots

4. In your opinion, was the revised absentee ballot application form used in the pilot an improvement over the absentee ballot application form used in your town in prior elections or primaries?

Yes	5	Kept certain individuals from abusing the system
No	2	Never saw one before

5. One of the components of the pilot program was that the list of absentee ballot applicants as well as the executed applications themselves were kept confidential until three days before the election. Do you favor this confidentiality component over the current law that provides that the list of absentee ballot applicants and the applications are public records and open to inspection by anyone?

Yes 4

Comments: Less opportunity for abuse

No 3

Comments: Favor public records

6. Another component of the pilot program was to restrict distribution of absentee ballot applications to the town clerk, registrar of voters and a neutral corps of absentee ballot coordinators appointed by each registrar. Do you favor this approach over the procedures used in prior elections or primaries, which permit candidates, political parties and their agents to distribute blank absentee ballot applications and assist voters in the completion of absentee ballot applications?

Yes 4

Comments: Exposure to corruption is eliminated, possibility for coercion

No 3

Comments: Adds unnecessary bureaucracy, control too concentrated

7. Do you think that the absentee ballot pilot project generally served the voter well? explain your answer:

Yes 3

Comments: Insured integrity without additional hurdles for voters, system worked

No 4

Comments: Fewer voters were active, keep it simple, adds additional layer of bureaucracy and expense

9. Did you provide lists of names of persons who requested absentee ballots to the Town Clerk or Registrars of Voters?

Yes 1

No 4

Don't know 1

10. Were you pleased with the way your lists were handled?

Yes 1

NA 2

No 1, third party obstacle from Town Clerk and ROVs

11. Did you experience any occasion or instance of a potential absentee ballot applicant complaining about or being unhappy with the procedures for obtaining an absentee ballot application under the pilot?

Yes 3

Comments: No notice in timely manor, obstacles, neglect from TC and ROV, calls from people who did not receive ballots

No 4

12. Did you experience any occasion or instance of a potential absentee ballot applicant being pleased with the procedures for obtaining an absentee ballot application under the pilot?

NO 5

13. Do you regularly campaign at apartment complexes or multi family dwellings?

Yes 4

No 2

NA 1

14. Do you favor the extension of supervised voting, which is presently required at nursing homes with more than 20 voters, to apartment complexes or multi-family dwellings where more than 20 voters request absentee ballots?

Uncertain 1

No opinion

No 3

Yes 1

15. Do you think that there was sufficient publicity concerning the absentee voting pilot program in your town?

No 5

Comments: Most people confused, didn't see any, no public notice by Town Clerk

Not sure 1

Yes 1

16. Do you favor removing the ability of candidates, campaign and party workers to distribute applications?

Yes 4

Comments: Favor voter access to applications and too much room for pressure

No 2

Comments: Do not want right to talk and visit with people taken away

17. Do you favor limiting the distribution of absentee ballot application forms to election officials such as the Town Clerk, Registrar of Voters or Absentee Ballot Coordinators?

No 2

Comments: too restrictive, old way better

Yes 4

18. Do you favor limiting the class of individuals who may assist a voter in the completion of an absentee ballot application form to election officials such as the Town Clerk, Registrar of Voters or Absentee Ballot Coordinators and personal designees of the applicant who are members of the applicant's family or health care providers?

Yes 4

Comments: Prevents fraud and abuse to a certain degree

No 3

Comments: Too many regulations, scare potential voters, too much control

19. Under the pilot program, a person is eligible to serve as an absentee ballot coordinator unless he/she is a member of a town committee, a town employee, or is working for a candidate or political party in the election. Do you favor or oppose such restrictions on the eligibility to serve as an absentee ballot coordinator?

Favor All Restrictions

4, ABC should be unbiased

Oppose all

2, takes away rights

Favor Some

1, feels Town Committee member should be

eligible

19. Did the new procedures in the pilot program enable you to focus on other aspects of your campaign?

No 3 happy with old way, new too complicated

NA 1

Yes 3, More time to campaign

20. Would you support or oppose the extension of the absentee voting pilot project as a statewide mandate?

No 2

Comments: Opposed to unfounded state mandates, unfunded or under funded mandates not good

Yes 3

Comments: Sees benefit of program, worked well

21. If you have any other opinions or suggestions concerning your experience with the absentee ballot pilot project please express your opinion here:

Pleased with tight restriction for validating ballot

New idea clumsy, costly and too restrictive, in favor of past practice

Leave process as it currently is

WINSTED
Absentee Voting Reform Pilot Project
EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE
For: Absentee Ballot Coordinators
Public Act 2003-227

1. Do you feel that the absentee voting pilot procedures were an improvement over the regular absentee ballot application procedures used in prior elections or primaries?

Yes 8

Comments: Voter given choice if they want application or not, no pressure by candidates, removes suspicion of coercion, helps prevent mistakes, limits application to those who need them and fair distributions.

2. Do you feel that the absentee voting pilot procedures favorably or unfavorably affected the integrity of the absentee ballot process?

Favorably 8

Comments: All parties represented, start to finish well managed, phone calls confirmed need for application, two parties insure integrity

3. In your opinion, was the revised absentee ballot application form used in the pilot an improvement over the absentee ballot application form used in your town in prior elections or primaries?

Yes 1

Comment: Easier to read

Don't know or no comment 7

4. One of the components of the pilot program was that the list of absentee ballot applicants as well as the executed applications themselves were kept confidential until three days before the election. Do you favor this confidentiality component over the current law that provides that the list of absentee ballot applicants and the applications are public records and open to inspection by anyone?

Yes 7

Comments: Prevents improper use of information, confidentiality important

No 1

Comments: Favor public record for cross check after elections, right to know

5. Another component of the pilot program was to restrict distribution of absentee ballot applications to the town clerk, registrar of voters and a neutral corps of absentee ballot coordinators appointed by each registrar. Do you favor this approach over the procedures used in prior elections or primaries, which permit candidates, political parties and their agents to distribute blank absentee ballot applications and assist voters in the completion of absentee ballot applications?

Yes 8

Comments: No pressure or undue influence, prevent inappropriate abuse, puts responsibility on ABCs, protects voters

6. Do you think that the absentee ballot pilot project generally served the voter well?

Yes 8

7. How many times per week did you receive from the Town Clerk or Registrars of Voters a list of potential absentee ballot applicants?

2 ABCs said 3 times a week

2 ABCs said 1 a week

2 ABCs said 0

8. Did you encounter any difficulties with voters in ascertaining whether they in fact needed an absentee ballot application and/or assistance in completing an absentee ballot application?

No 8

9. Did persons identified as potential absentee ballot applicants generally receive you well?

Yes 8

10. Did you experience any occasion or instance of a potential absentee ballot applicant complaining about or being unhappy with the procedures for obtaining an absentee ballot application under the pilot?

No 8

11. Did you experience any occasion or instance of a potential absentee ballot applicant being pleased with the procedures for obtaining an absentee ballot application under the pilot?

Yes 7

Comments: pleased no unsolicited applications and contact was by phone, phone calls appreciated, happy to have a visitor, felt it was fairer

No 1

12. Did you experience any difficulty working as a pair with the absentee ballot coordinator appointed by the other party's appointing Registrar.

No 8

13. How many voters requesting assistance in the completion of their ballot were unable to indicate a preference or cast their ballot?

None 8

14. Did you receive adequate direction from the Registrars of Voters or other sources concerning your duties in the pilot program?

Yes 6

Comments: Adequate instructions and training, informative meetings
all questions answered

15. Do you have any suggestions for improvement in communications or direction with the Registrars of Voters?

No

16. How many apartment complexes or multi-family dwellings did you visit?

5 ABCs said none

3 ABCs said 3

17. Do you favor the extension of supervised voting, which is presently required at nursing homes with more than 20 voters, to apartment complexes or multi-family dwellings where more than 20 voters request absentee ballots?

Yes 6

Comments: Insure all parties represented, nursing home residents too easily confused, ABCs different parties, impartial, no pressure

No 1

Comment: Help is available from family

18. Do you think that there was sufficient publicity concerning the absentee voting pilot program in your town?

No 8

Comments: Very little publicity, had to explain to voters, suggest weekly reminder in newspaper

19. Do you favor removing the ability of candidates, campaign and party workers to distribute applications?

Yes 8

Comments: ABC procedure good one, eliminate undue influence,
remove pressure

20. Do you favor limiting the distribution of absentee ballot application forms to election officials such as the Town Clerk, Registrar of Voters or Absentee Ballot Coordinators?

Yes 6, would keep the process legitimate
No 2

21. Do you favor limiting the class of individuals who may assist a voter in the completion of an absentee ballot application form to election officials such as the Town Clerk, Registrar of Voters or Absentee Ballot Coordinators and personal designees of the applicant who are members of the applicant's family or health care providers?

Yes 7
Comments: To all except health care providers, potential for abuse
lessened, individuals pledge to be impartial
No opinion 1

22. Under the pilot program, a person is eligible to serve as an Absentee Ballot Coordinator unless he/she is a member of a town committee, a town employee, or is working for a candidate or political party in the election. Do you favor or oppose such restrictions on the eligibility to serve as an absentee ballot coordinator?

Favor All Restrictions 5
Comments: Keep integrity, restrictions help impartiality
Favor some 3
Comments: Town workers would be ok, town committees and employees
ok

23. Were there any instances where a voter's name was provided to you as in need of an absentee ballot application, but the town clerk, registrar of voters or absentee ballot coordinator subsequently learned that the voter denied making such a request?

No 8

24. Would you support or oppose the extension of the absentee voting pilot project as a statewide mandate?

Support 7
Comments: Prevents fraud, protect from harassment, fair and more
honest, believe process was fair, and went well

25. Would you serve as an Absentee Ballot Coordinator in the future?

Yes 5
No 1

26. What, if anything, would you change concerning your duties as a ABC?

None, wouldn't change a thing.

27. If you have any other opinions or suggestions concerning your experience with the absentee ballot pilot project please express your opinion here:

Voters appreciate calls, protect from harassment.

WINSTED
Absentee Voting Reform Pilot Project
EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE
For: Voters
Public Act 2003-227

1. Did you ever vote by absentee ballot in any previous election?

Yes 2

2. Do you feel that the absentee voting pilot procedures were an improvement over the regular absentee ballot application procedures used in prior elections or primaries?

Yes 1
Doesn't matter 1

3. Do you feel that the absentee voting pilot procedures favorably or unfavorably affected the integrity of the absentee ballot process?

Not at all 1
No opinion 1

4. In your opinion, was the revised absentee ballot application form used in the pilot an improvement over the absentee ballot application form used in your town in prior elections or primaries?

No difference 1
NA 1

5. One of the components of the pilot program was that the list of absentee ballot applicants as well as the executed applications themselves were kept confidential until three days before the election. Do you favor this confidentiality component over the current law that provides that the list of absentee ballot applicants and the applications are public records and open to inspection by anyone?

No difference
NA

6. Another component of the pilot program was to restrict distribution of absentee ballot applications to the town clerk, registrar of voters and a neutral corps of absentee ballot coordinators appointed by each registrar.

Do you favor this approach over the procedures used in prior elections or primaries, which permit candidates, political parties and their agents to distribute blank absentee ballot applications and assist voters in the completion of absentee ballot applications?

Yes 2

Comments: The new procedure eliminates any chance of abuse

7. Do you think that the absentee ballot pilot project generally served you well?

Yes 2

8. Did you have any problem obtaining an absentee ballot application?

No, ABCs came to the door
Not this year

9. Did you ask anyone to obtain an application for you?

No 2

10. Were you happy or unhappy with the procedures for obtaining an absentee ballot application under the pilot?

Happy 1

11. Did you require assistance in the completion of your application or ballot?

No 2

12. Were you happy with the service you received in obtaining an absentee ballot application or your request for assistance in completing an absentee ballot application?

Yes 1 excellent

No 1

13. How did you learn about the new absentee ballot procedures in your town?

ABCs
Neighbor

14. As a result of this pilot program, did you have more or less contact with candidates?

About the same

15. Were you happy or unhappy about the level of contact from the candidate?

So so

16. Do you favor removing the ability of candidates, campaign and party workers to distribute applications?

No opinions

17. Do you favor limiting the distribution of absentee ballot application forms to election officials such as the Town Clerk, Registrar of Voters or Absentee Ballot Coordinators?

No opinions

18. Would you support or oppose the extension of the absentee voting pilot project as a statewide mandate?

Support 1

19. If you have any other opinions or suggestions concerning your experience with the absentee ballot pilot project please express your opinion here:

Very satisfied



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
STATE ELECTIONS ENFORCEMENT COMMISSION
20 Trinity Street - Suite 101 • Hartford, Connecticut 06106 - 1628

KENT
Absentee Voting Reform Pilot Project
EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE
For: Candidates and Party Chairs
Public Act 2003-227

1. In what capacity did you participate in the 2003 Absentee Ballot Pilot Project?

Candidate 5
Political Party Chairperson 1

2. Do you feel that the absentee voting pilot procedures were an improvement over the regular absentee ballot application procedures used in prior elections or primaries?

Yes 1 Less opportunity for manipulation
No 2 less personal, too cumbersome

3. Do you feel that the absentee voting pilot procedures favorably or unfavorably affected the integrity of the absentee ballot process?

Favorably 1
Not at all 2

4. In your opinion, was the revised absentee ballot application form used in the pilot an improvement over the absentee ballot application form used in your town in prior elections or primaries?

Yes 1
Don't know or no comment 4

5. One of the components of the pilot program was that the list of absentee ballot applicants as well as the executed applications themselves were kept confidential until three days before the election. Do you favor this confidentiality component over the current law that provides that the list of absentee ballot applicants and the applications are public records and open to inspection by anyone?

Yes 2
No 3

6. Another component of the pilot program was to restrict distribution of absentee ballot applications to the town clerk, registrar of voters and a neutral corps of absentee ballot coordinators appointed by each registrar. Do you favor this approach over the procedures used in prior elections or primaries, which permit candidates, political parties and their agents to distribute blank absentee ballot applications and assist voters in the completion of absentee ballot applications?

Yes 3

Comments: More honest approach to reduce bias, keep parties and candidates out of process to reduce chances of irregularities.

No 1 less personal

7. Do you think that the absentee ballot pilot project generally served the voter well?

Yes 1

Don't know or no comments

8. Did you provide lists of names of persons who requested absentee ballots to the Town Clerk or Registrars of Voters

Yes 1

No 5

9. Were you pleased with the way your lists were handled?

No applicable 3

Yes 1

10. Did you experience any occasion or instance of a potential absentee ballot applicant complaining about or being unhappy with the procedures for obtaining an absentee ballot application under the pilot?

No 3

Yes Seniors expected to be provided with them the same as in the past

11. Did you experience any occasion or instance of a potential absentee ballot applicant being pleased with the procedures for obtaining an absentee ballot application under the pilot?

No 5

12. Do you regularly campaign at apartment complexes or multi family dwellings?

No 4

Yes 1

13. Do you favor the extension of supervised voting, which is presently required at nursing homes with more than 20 voters, to apartment complexes or multi-family dwellings where more than 20 voters request absentee ballots?

Yes 4

Comments: good idea, only if a large percent of voters in building

No 1 supervised voting is an invitation to manipulation

14. Do you think that there was sufficient publicity concerning the absentee voting pilot program in your town?

Yes 1

No or don't know 3

15. Do you favor removing the ability of candidates, campaign and party workers to distribute applications?

No 1

Yes 4

Comments: Some voters continue to expect it

16. Do you favor limiting the distribution of absentee ballot application forms to election officials such as the Town Clerk, Registrar of Voters or Absentee Ballot Coordinators?

Yes 3

No 2 Too cumbersome, it is expected by voters

17. Do you favor limiting the class of individuals who may assist a voter in the completion of an absentee ballot application form to election officials such as the Town Clerk, Registrar of Voters or Absentee Ballot Coordinators and personal designees of the applicant who are members of the applicant's family or health care providers?

Yes 4

Comment: Town Clerk should be included only when not on ballot

No 1

18. Under the pilot program, a person is eligible to serve as an absentee ballot coordinator unless he/she is a member of a town committee, a town employee, or is working for a candidate or political party in the election. Do you favor or oppose such restrictions on the eligibility to serve as an absentee ballot coordinator?

Favor all restrictions 4

Favor some/not all 1

19. Did the new procedures in the pilot program enable you to focus on other aspects of your campaign?

No 4

No difference 1

20 Would you support or oppose the extension of the absentee voting pilot project as a statewide mandate?

Yes support 3

No 1

Don't know 1

21. If you have any other opinions or suggestions concerning your experience with the absentee ballot pilot project please express your opinion here:

KENT
Absentee Voting Reform Pilot Project
EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE
For: Town Clerks and Registrars of Voters
Public Act 2003-227

1. In what capacity did you participate in the 2003 Absentee Voting Reform Pilot Project?

Town Clerk	Darlene F. Brady
Registrar of Voters	Marjorie H. Wells & Judith Howland

2. Do you feel that the absentee voting pilot procedures were an improvement over the regular absentee ballot application procedures used in prior elections or primaries?

ROVs said their role was minimal
Town Clerk, new Town Clerk, couldn't compare

3. Do you feel that the absentee voting pilot procedures favorably or unfavorably affected the integrity of the absentee ballot process?

ROVs:	not at all
Town Clerk:	Favorable

4. In your opinion, was the revised absentee ballot application form used in the pilot an improvement over the absentee ballot application form used in your town in prior elections or primaries.

ROV:	Yes, user friendly, easier to read
Town Clerk:	Yes, clearer, larger font, defines use of

5. One of the components of the pilot program was that the list of absentee ballot applicants as well as the executed applications themselves were kept confidential until three days before the election. Do you favor this confidentiality component over the current law that provides that the list of absentee ballot applicants and the applications are public records and open to inspection by anyone?

ROV:	1 yes
	1 no
Town Clerk:	Yes, favor confidentiality

6. Another component of the pilot program was to restrict distribution of absentee ballot applications to the town clerk, registrar of voters and a neutral corps of absentee ballot coordinators appointed by each registrar. Do you favor this approach over the procedures used in prior elections or primaries, which permit candidates, political parties and their agents to distribute blank absentee ballot applications and assist voters in the completion of absentee ballot applications?

Town Clerk: Yes

7. Do you think that the absentee ballot pilot project generally served the voter well?

Town Clerk: Yes

8. Did you encounter any difficulties with voters in ascertaining whether they in fact needed an absentee ballot application and/or assistance in completing an absentee ballot application

Town Clerk: No

9. Did you experience any occasion or instance of a potential absentee ballot applicant complaining about or being unhappy with the procedures for obtaining an absentee ballot application under the pilot?

Town Clerk: No

10. Did you experience any occasion or instance of a potential absentee ballot applicant being pleased with the new procedures for obtaining an absentee ballot application under the pilot?

Town Clerk: No

11. Do you think that there was sufficient publicity concerning the absentee voting pilot program in your town?

ROVs: Yes, publications in local news

Town Clerk: Yes

12. Do you favor removing the ability of candidates, campaign and party workers to distribute applications?

ROVs: No

Town Clerk: Yes

13. Do you favor limiting the distribution of absentee ballot application forms to election officials such as the Town Clerk, Registrar of Voters or Absentee Ballot Application Coordinators?

ROV: No

Town Clerk: Yes

14. Do you favor limiting the class of individuals who may assist a voter in the completion of an absentee ballot application form to election officials such as the Town Clerk, Registrar of Voters or Absentee Ballot Coordinators and personal designees of the applicant who are members of the applicant's family or health care providers

ROV: Yes
Town Clerk: Yes

15. Do you have other suggestions for how to improve the absentee voting process?

ROV: No

16. Under the pilot program, a person is eligible to serve as an absentee ballot coordinator unless he/she is a member of a town committee, a town employee, or is working for a candidate or political party in the election. Do you favor or oppose such restrictions on the eligibility to serve as an absentee ballot coordinator?

ROV: One favored all restrictions
ROV: One favored some restrictions; thinks town committee members would be ok

17. (To be answered by Town Clerks) Please provide the following statistical information concerning the use of absentee ballots in your town:

Number of requests for applications	108
Number of applications returned	102
Number of ballots sent out	102
Number of ballots returned	98
Number of ballots counted	98
Number of ballots rejected	0

18. (To be answered by Town Clerks) Please provide the number of ballots sent out and returned in the *last* municipal election (2001)

Number of ballots sent out	71
Number of ballots returned	65

19. Please identify the number of voters requesting an absentee ballot because of:

Illness	2
Physical Disability	12
Out of town	86
Religious	0
Military	2
Poll worker	0

20. Did the Absentee Voting Pilot Program affect or reduce the number of multiple applications from the same voter?

Town Clerk no multiple applications

21. How many voters required assistance in the completion of their absentee ballot applications?

Town Clerk 6

22. How many voters required assistance in the completion of their absentee ballots?

ROVs said ABC's would know, maybe 20, 21, 22

Town Clerk 6, individuals were assisted, live local nursing homes

23. Were there any instances where a voter's name was provided to the town clerk as in need of an absentee ballot application, but the town clerk, registrar of voters or absentee ballot coordinator subsequently learned that the voter denied making such a request?

ROVs No

Town Clerk No

24. (To be answered by Registrars of Voters) Did you have any difficulty finding qualified people to serve as absentee ballot coordinators? Yes/No (Circle one)

ROVs No

25. (To be answered by Registrars of Voters) What, if anything, did you pay your absentee ballot coordinators?

ROVs \$10.60 per hour from town funds

26. (To be answered by Registrars of Voters) What were your total expenditures for absentee ballot coordinators? If you paid them hourly, please indicate their hourly wage _____

27. (To be answered by Registrars of Voters) How much did your absentee ballot coordinators work? Please quantify in terms of days or hours worked and number of site visits.

ROVs 3 ½ hrs

28. Should absentee ballot coordinators be paid?

ROVs yes

Town Clerk yes

29. Would you support or oppose the extension of the absentee voting pilot project as a statewide mandate?

ROVs

Doesn't matter, the small town view

Town Clerk

yes

30. If you have any other opinions or suggestions concerning your experience with the absentee voting pilot project please express your opinion here:

KENT

Absentee Voting Reform Pilot Project EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE For: Absentee Ballot Coordinators Public Act 2003-227

1. Do you feel that the absentee voting pilot procedures were an improvement over the regular absentee ballot application procedures used in prior elections or primaries?

No small town, made no difference

2. Do you feel that the absentee voting pilot procedures favorably or unfavorably affected the integrity of the absentee ballot process?

Favorable, can't hurt the process

3. In your opinion, was the revised absentee ballot application form used in the pilot an improvement over the absentee ballot application form used in your town in prior elections or primaries?

No opinion

4. One of the components of the pilot program was that the list of absentee ballot applicants as well as the executed applications themselves were kept confidential until three days before the election. Do you favor this confidentiality component over the current law that provides that the list of absentee ballot applicants and the applications are public records and open to inspection by anyone?

Yes, favor confidentiality and privacy

5. Another component of the pilot program was to restrict distribution of absentee ballot applications to the town clerk, registrar of voters and a neutral corps of absentee ballot coordinators appointed by each registrar. Do you favor this approach over the procedures used in prior elections or primaries, which permit candidates, political parties and their agents to distribute blank absentee ballot applications and assist voters in the completion of absentee ballot applications?

Yes, better control over those with questionable ethics

6. Do you think that the absentee ballot pilot project generally served the voter well?

Yes, can't hurt

7. How many times per week did you receive from the Town Clerk or Registrars of Voters a list of potential absentee ballot applicants?
- 0
8. Did you encounter any difficulties with voters in ascertaining whether they in fact needed an absentee ballot application and/or assistance in completing an absentee ballot application?
- No
9. Did persons identified as potential absentee ballot applicants generally receive you well?
- NA
10. Did you experience any occasion or instance of a potential absentee ballot applicant complaining about or being unhappy with the procedures for obtaining an absentee ballot application under the pilot?
- No
11. Did you experience any occasion or instance of a potential absentee ballot applicant being pleased with the procedures for obtaining an absentee ballot application under the pilot?
- No
12. Did you experience any difficulty working as a pair with the absentee ballot coordinator appointed by the other party's appointing Registrar.
- No
13. How many voters requesting assistance in the completion of their ballot were unable to indicate a preference or cast their ballot?
- 0
14. Did you receive adequate direction from the Registrars of Voters or other sources concerning your duties in the pilot program?
- Yes, no problems
15. Do you have any suggestions for improvement in communications or direction with the Registrars of Voters?
- No

16. How many apartment complexes or multi-family dwellings did you visit?

0

17. Do you favor the extension of supervised voting, which is presently required at nursing homes with more than 20 voters, to apartment complexes or multi-family dwellings where more than 20 voters request absentee ballots?

Yes, not in small town but yes in large cities

18. Do you think that there was sufficient publicity concerning the absentee voting pilot program in your town?

No, small local paper

19. Do you favor removing the ability of candidates, campaign and party workers to distribute applications?

Yes

20. Do you favor limiting the distribution of absentee ballot application forms to election officials such as the Town Clerk, Registrar of Voters or Absentee Ballot Coordinators?

Yes

21. Do you favor limiting the class of individuals who may assist a voter in the completion of an absentee ballot application form to election officials such as the Town Clerk, Registrar of Voters or Absentee Ballot Coordinators and personal designees of the applicant who are members of the applicant's family or health care providers?

Yes

22. Under the pilot program, a person is eligible to serve as an Absentee Ballot Coordinator unless he/she is a member of a town committee, a town employee, or is working for a candidate or political party in the election. Do you favor or oppose such restrictions on the eligibility to serve as an absentee ballot coordinator?

Favor all restrictions

23. Were there any instances where a voter's name was provided to you as in need of an absentee ballot application, but the town clerk, registrar of voters or absentee ballot coordinator subsequently learned that the voter denied making such a request?

No

24. Would you support or oppose the extension of the absentee voting pilot project as a statewide mandate?

Yes, good idea

25. Would you serve as an Absentee Ballot Coordinator in the future?

Yes

26. What, if anything, would you change concerning your duties as a ABC?

27. If you have any other opinions or suggestions concerning your experience with the absentee ballot pilot project please express your opinion here:

KENT

Absentee Voting Reform Pilot Project EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE For: Voters Public Act 2003-227

1. Did you ever vote by absentee ballot in any previous election? Yes/No (Circle one)

No 3
Yes 2

2. Do you feel that the absentee voting pilot procedures were an improvement over the regular absentee ballot application procedures used in prior elections or primaries?

NA 2
Does not remember 2
First time

3. Do you feel that the absentee voting pilot procedures favorably or unfavorably affected the integrity of the absentee ballot process?

Not at all 3
No experience 1
Favorably 1, foolproof

4. In your opinion, was the revised absentee ballot application form used in the pilot an improvement over the absentee ballot application form used in your town in prior elections or primaries?

NA 1
No opinion 1
Yes 1 easy to understand
No: 1

5. One of the components of the pilot program was that the list of absentee ballot applicants as well as the executed applications themselves were kept confidential until three days before the election. Do you favor this confidentiality component over the current law that provides that the list of absentee ballot applicants and the applications are public records and open to inspection by anyone?

Yes 5

6. Another component of the pilot program was to restrict distribution of absentee ballot applications to the town clerk, registrar of voters and a neutral corps of absentee ballot coordinators appointed by each registrar.

Do you favor this approach over the procedures used in prior elections or primaries, which permit candidates, political parties and their agents to distribute blank absentee ballot applications and assist voters in the completion of absentee ballot applications?

NA 1
Yes 4 less chance of impropriety

7. Do you think that the absentee ballot pilot project generally served you well?

Yes 5

8. Did you have any problem obtaining an absentee ballot application? Yes/No (Circle one)

No 5

9. Did you ask anyone to obtain an application for you?

No 3
Yes 2, my husband

10. Were you happy or unhappy with the procedures for obtaining an absentee ballot application under the pilot?

Happy 5
Comments: easy, good instructions

11. Did you require assistance in the completion of your application or ballot?

No 5

12. Were you happy with the service you received in obtaining an absentee ballot application or your request for assistance in completing an absentee ballot application?

Yes 5
Comments: very professional, town clerk was there for help, friendly & cordial

13. How did you learn about the new absentee ballot procedures in your town?

Never voted AB, didn't know it was new
Town Clerk explained the process

14. As a result of this pilot program, did you have more or less contact with candidates?

Same
Not contact before
Less

15. Were you happy or unhappy about the level of contact from the candidate?

Happy	2
NA	1

16. Do you favor removing the ability of candidates, campaign and party workers to distribute applications?

Yes	5
Comments:	Town Clerk only

17. Do you favor limiting the distribution of absentee ballot application forms to election officials such as the Town Clerk, Registrar of Voters or Absentee Ballot Coordinators?

Yes	5
Comments:	as long as they are not running for office

18. Would you support or oppose the extension of the absentee voting pilot project as a statewide mandate?

Yes	4	
No	1	make it arbitrary

19. If you have any other opinions or suggestions concerning your experience with the absentee ballot pilot project please express your opinion here: